

Equilibrium



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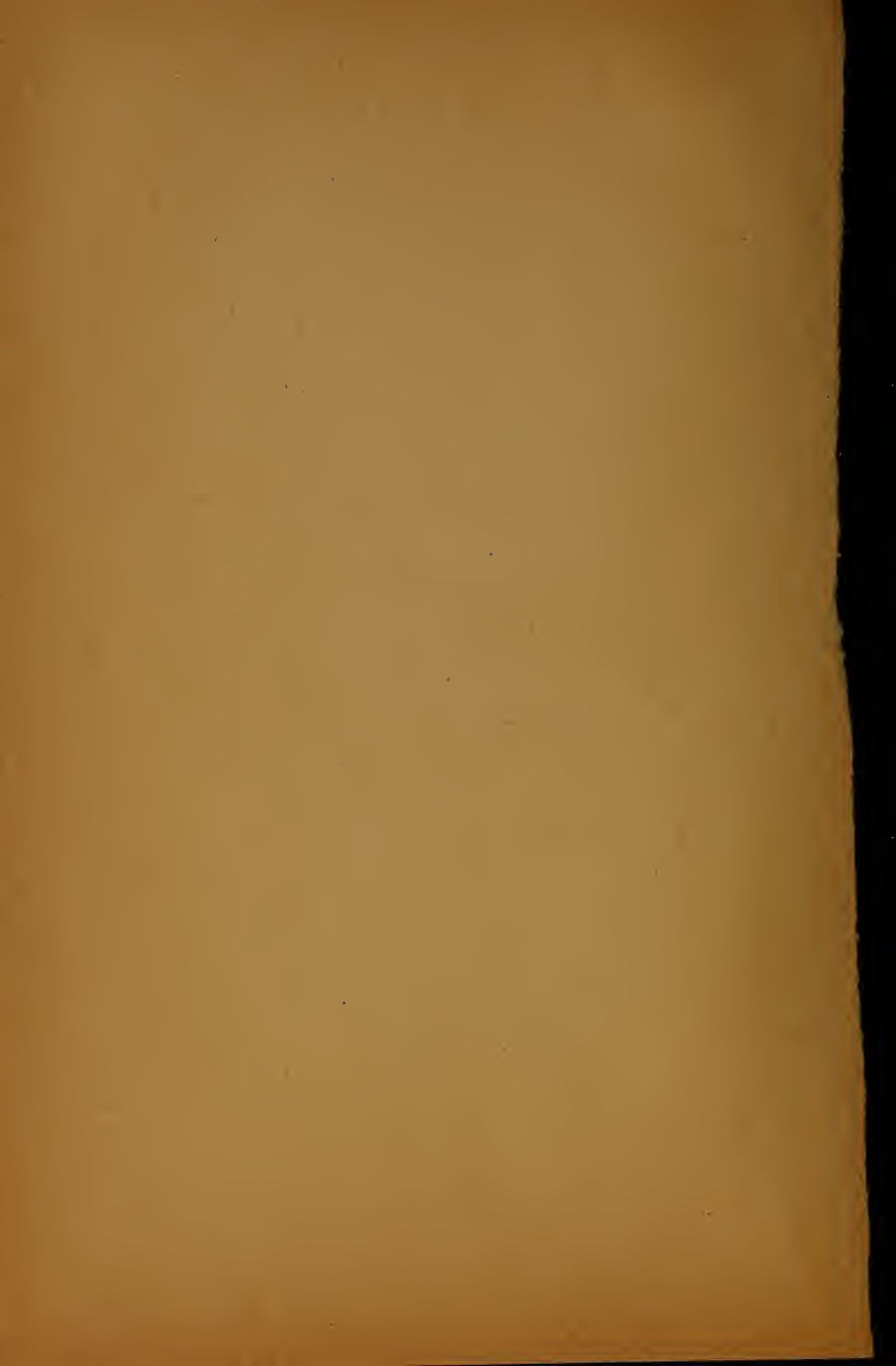


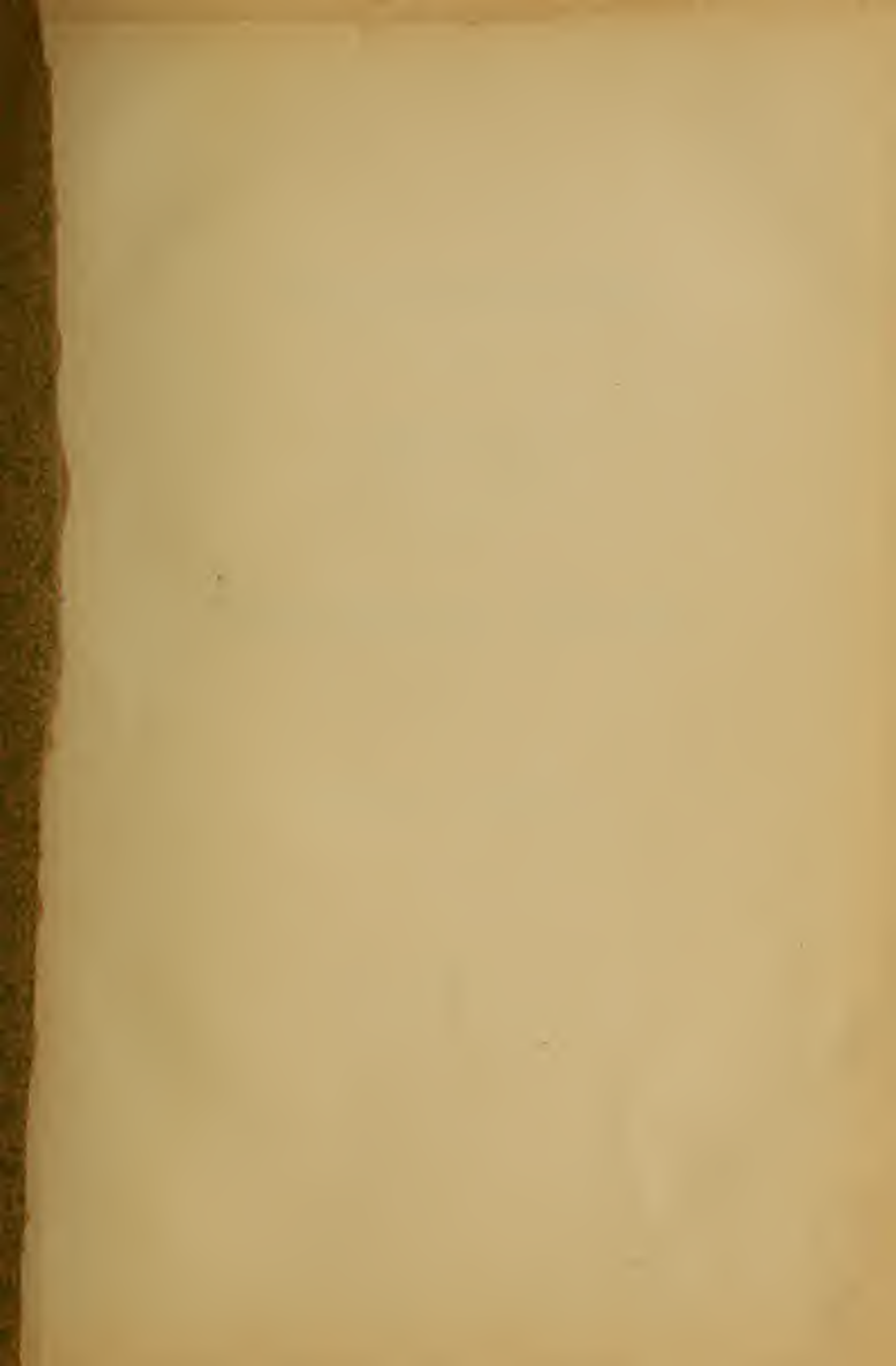
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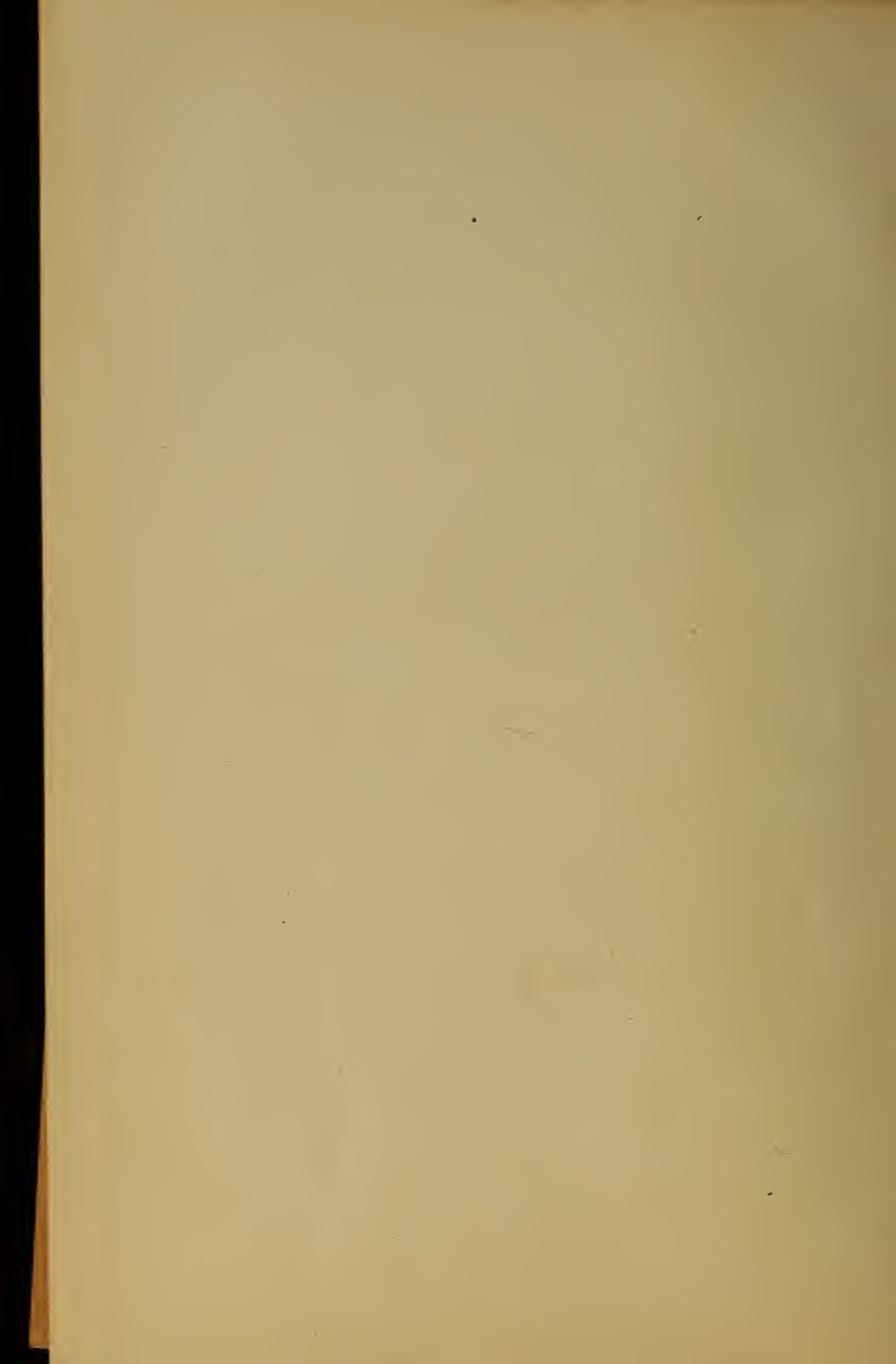
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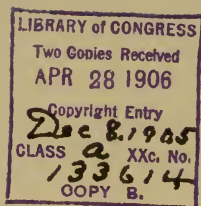


Equilibrium
OR
Meetings
OF THE
Sphinx Club

By
Charles F. Farrar

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Introductory

Kind Reader, you may have an idle wish to know,
Why this my feeble attempt to sow
Seeds of Nature in a "cultured" soil,
Where unnurtured they must die, thus foil
The power of a fact.

This story is culled from ancient lore;
Socrates, Plato, Solon, 'tis to these I soar.
Comrades of Truth and Nature, they can tell,
Secrets of life on which man's mind should dwell,
Think, then act.

Their words do but the course of Nature trace,
Through all the ages of this human race,
Follow this tribe's course and that one's to its close,
Victory's triumph, defeat's carnage and dark repose,
Or let History teach.

'Tis a simple lesson that a child could learn,
False flush of pride on victory's brow to burn,
And know cold death the vanquished doth reward,
These extremes should work with one accord,
Not one the other overreach.

For from victory and defeat conscience was born,
A noble offspring, sunbeam from the dawn,
Placed in man's heart to guide aright
His faltering footsteps to the beacon light,
On wisdom's golden gate.

To Nature we belong, and in a natural way
We must live and hold at bay
Our passions, which, at times so wild,
Controlled, governed and made mild,
Learn to love, forget to hate.

C. F. F.

Chapter I

WO men were walking down a street in an old New England town, one of those old villages in grand Old New England that has given up all of her young men, and all the things that go to make up life in a community, given up all these to the nearby city of trouble and care, which has taken all the bright jewels, the treasures of home life, the very humanity of the human family as it used to be in the old days, and left only the old people to die and the town to go to decay.

The two men, evidently just arrived from the city, made their way to what was once an old town hall, surrounded by great elms, and with a generous lawn dotted here and there with shrubs and flowering plants; a small snake-like river wound its serene way through the village, but had to stop when it came to this beautiful spot and smile with nature, and

in stopping here, it formed a fair-sized pond at the west side of the old hall, and then hurried on to dash through the remains of an old water wheel, part of the ancient grist mill long in disuse at the lower end of the town. The men walked up the gravel path to the old hall, opened the door and were welcomed in by a middle-aged janitor.

The interior of this building was one large hall, very high studded. The walls were adorned with pictures of Alexander the Great, Julius Caesar, Alfred the Great, the Black Prince, famous son of the third Edward of England; the great Dukes of Marlborough and Wellington looked down from out of solid oak frames; Frederick the Great of Prussia and the "Man of Destiny" the Great Napoleon, were there also; George Washington held the place of honor in a very large gold frame over the huge fireplace; on pedestals were the busts of the great Shakespeare, Milton, Dante, Lord Bacon and others, renowned in literature and art. The furniture was of old colonial style. Around the entire room was a library of books of every

description, ancient and modern, such was the abode of the Sphinx Club. The two men sat down in the spacious chairs wheeled into a circle composed of five other men who would strike the beholder as exceptionally intelligent. The two last to sit down—of one it would be said he was a prosperous man of the world. He was young, fair-haired, with blue eyes, a strong face denoting high culture and strong will. This man was Cyril Payne, having an easy-going nature, though at times quite sarcastic, his club mates called him by his Christian name. The other was Richard Plantagenet; that he was a direct descendant of the Lion Heart is not known, but all who knew him would say that he had no weak heart in defending the right against the wrong, but as we all have the strain of Adam's blood running through our veins, he was of the same blood as Richard the First of England. He was addressed as Richard by his fellows; this using of his given name was due in part to Cyril's constant use of it, and in part to often calling on him for information on all subjects that

came up for discussion. He was dark complexioned and had a face and figure like Oliver Wendell Holmes' "Brahmin" New England school master.

"Now here we have our wise men," said one of the five. "What we were discussing was insincerity."

"Insincerity is a virtue, or I should say a modern virtue, one of the twentieth century slogans," observed Cyril.

"That explains the reason you are always talking 'double,' " said Richard, "what I mean is that you will say one thing and mean another, so much, in fact, that I don't know half the time what to think of your words as they in nowise coincide with your actions. You will say that it is 'utter folly' to give to a beggar, as we have institutions for their care, pay men large salaries to take care of them, and so on. Still, you are the first to give to these people, as I will prove. The other day, as we were walking down the street, we met an old, and to all ap-

pearances, infirm man, who requested a little help. You were the first to fish out a coin.

"I then and there made up my mind to catch you, and straightway, when we parted, I went back and asked the bootblacks and newsboys where this old fellow lived, and got all the information that I wished for, not only his history and address, but the social status of all others that came into the boys' imaginations. Well, I followed the boys' directions in regard to the old man's home, and even as I located the place the old man appeared on the scene, made his way to the door of a fine looking apartment house and pushed the bell.

"A clean elderly lady answered saying, 'Hello, George, done well today?' He nodded his head and passed in. Well, I promptly went up to the door. The same lady answered my call. I happened to have a book with me. I pretended to be a book agent. She asked me in, and I stepped into as fine a parlor as you have at your home. The lady said she would call George. She had no need as George came into the room at once, as fine and healthy looking

an individual as you would wish to see, about middle-aged, gray hair, blue eyes. He had evidently dropped his make-up suddenly as I could see some dirty marks around his eyes. Well, I actually sold the book for one dollar, George 'panning' out the dollar. And so here is your half dollar that you gave this old deceiver, the other half I will keep to pay for the investigation."

"Well," said Cyril, "I don't see but that you have proved what I said in the first place was correct, namely, that insincerity is a modern virtue, and you have also sold a one-dollar-and-a-half book for one dollar, which makes you fifty cents out instead of me." And Cyril laughed. "I tell you this is an insincere age that our country is passing through, and the sooner we get on the other side of it the better. Now let me bore you with a couple of instances of crying injustice. Suppose a young man falls in love and shows it, as some of them do. The girl takes all kind of advantages of him, as everybody else does. He is looked upon as an easy mark. His friends meet him and say,

'Saw you having a jolly time last night and you didn't know it either, so now fellows he must treat.' And away goes a couple of dollars. He goes to the florist who says as he smiles blandly, 'Oh! yes, I know, the boys told me so. I will send her something nice,' and the bill comes in for ten dollars. He goes into a jewelry store and is met with, 'Oh! yes, for a young lady?' and the young man tries to answer 'yes.' It costs him fifty dollars. And chocolates! Well, the candy makers are all millionaires with a house in New York and a villa in Newport, and he is their prey. And during all this robbery the girl, perceiving that she has him 'stuck' will make him jealous 'just for fun.' And this is all because he is sincere. Poor young man!

"And what happens to the business man if he takes everything sincerely? I need hardly say failure. Suppose a business man starts out on a morning to take everything and everybody sincerely, what would happen? Why, he would have all his 'friends,' his neighbors, and all the drummers in creation at his door,

trying to sell him all the rubbish that they had in stock for years, and all the gold bricks in the country."

"Enough of that," said Richard. "Please tell me if there has been a great deed done in any age that has not been accomplished by sincere people? Has any great act been done that is not the result of sincere endeavor? A large number of acts have been done through selfish ends, but the doer was sincere. The great Napoleon was a very sincere person, he was a man who had every confidence in himself, sincere confidence, and he was in my estimation the greatest man the world has ever seen, he is the mightiest example of sincerity that I could hold up to you, a man of small statue, education limited, but a man of powerfully sincere purposes. He came from Corsica, of humble parents, a mixture of Greek and French. He came alone and captured France and for fifteen years made her the most powerful nation in Europe, and planted his iron hand on all nations who rose up against him. To be sure he did not hold his power

long, but it was not his fault, but the fault of his people, and even the great Napoleon could not alter the Nation's make-up, all he could do was to show them the way and for a time compel them to follow it, but no mortal man could hold a whole nation in the palm of his hand, and of course the greatest general had to go down when the nation turned false to him."

"Oh! yes," said Cyril, "that's all right, but that is ancient history. Sincerity was everything in the eighteenth century. If a man called his neighbor a liar he would have to fight to the death with swords, pistols, or knives, but now if a man calls another a hard name the other fellow laughs and tells his friend how so-and-so made a fool of himself down town today, all the while this same fellow would like to kick the other fellow across the street or knock his head against the sidewalk. This comes, I believe, from the desire to get all the gold each and every man can grasp, and also from a very large percentage of cowardice."

"I agree with you on the percentage of

cowardice in the average man of the twentieth century," said Richard. "I think Edmond Burke is entirely right when he says 'terror is the common stock of all emotions,' and terror is about sixty per cent. of the feelings of the average man. This man is suffering from too much education. He knows too much(?) about life and death, so much that he is terror stricken if death is thought of. He is not so sure of himself as was his ignorant brother of the fourteenth to the sixteenth centuries. He claims to know so much about evolution, so much about the science of life, and the fact is he does not know any more than his brother of the sixteenth century. A great English historian unconsciously agrees with me on this point when he says that the autocratic rule of the kings and clergy and barons at this time was the best thing for man at this stage of his development. There is the very same stage of development going on in every child and man in the world today. Do they not come into this world without any knowledge of it? There is hardly any need for me to dwell on the false

idea he has about the improvements he has made. I claim he has not made any. I would refer you to my former arguments. Even such as look like new ideas you will find upon investigation were well known to the ancient Greeks and Romans, or long before them. Some modern discoveries were even in use in the 'stone age.' Some of the wisest sages will prove what I am saying and in the next breath tell me what a wonderful age of learning we are living in. It is very much like our hand-writing experts and our experts in chemistry giving evidence at a modern trial. One expert has just the same degree of intelligence and learning as the other. Still, one will say a handkerchief is blood-stained and the other will declare it is iron rust, or some other substance. And the learned writer will vouch for a signature and his equally learned brother will swear that it is false. It is the same with the medical profession. Two doctors graduated from the same college, have the same high standard of training, call them to a patient at different times,

one will say that the patient has diphtheria and the other will say it is typhoid. And so it is amongst our scientific men. They have built a 'Tower of Babel' that they cannot complete because of the 'confusion of tongues,' or, as I put it, 'confusion of knowledge'.

"Speaking of the fact that there is nothing new under the sun, I ran across an article in a modern publication telling a wonderful tale of the millions of new forms of fish-life in the depths of the ocean. Now this is only another case in point showing the wonderfully short-sightedness of some of our learned men. Those wonderfully formed deep-sea fishes, or mamalias, call them what you will, that these fellows are bringing to the surface, were common property of our prehistoric fathers—according to the Darwinians—and also found amongst the ancient Chinees, in drawings or sketches of time immemorial, and brought down to the present day art-work of the Chinaman.

"These people are one of the oldest nations on the face of the earth, and at the same time

they rarely adopt anything new, consequently never left the old way of doing things, and it is thus reasonable to suppose that these drawings were handed down to them, taken from life by their prehistoric fathers. And we have as I said before, also the evolution theory to prove this same fact, and I may add that in diggings in what is supposed to be the land of the cave men, our searchers after prehistoric information have found drawings of wild looking birds and mamalias evidently made by the cave men from life.

“Some of the wild fantastic scribblings of the North American Indians suggest prehistoric animals, fishes, and birds to me, as their writings suggest their Asiatic origin. It has been said that they are one of the lost tribes of Israel by men, who connected their writings with that of the ancient Hebrews, but it is very evident that they are Asiatic.

“Compare some of the living creatures with the fossil of prehistoric mamalias. Take the elephant for instance. The mammoth is said to be progenitor of the elephant of today, but

I believe that there were elephants on this earth at the same time that the mammoths were here. They were two distinct species of the same animal. The reason we have no mammoths now is that nature has no further use for them. She let them die out in favor of the elephant. It is the old law of the survival of the fittest of each species of animals. Talking of elephants puts me in mind of an item I saw in a paper the other day wherein it said there had just been an operation performed on a young elephant to remove his corns that had become very annoying to him since his captivity. He had been out of the African jungle less than a year. Now in the natural home of this poor beast it had no such trouble, for he would have been free to roam through the soft woods and plains for four hundred years or more and not have had so much as a corn on his foot, but less than a year's abode in civilization and his feet are covered with them. Like his keeper's feet, no doubt, for there are very few men who do not have corns, caused by tramping on concrete sidewalks and cob-

ble stones and the like. Men of late have adopted rubber heels and soles, which only make a bad matter worse, and are also using rubber-tired vehicles in their feeble attempt to get back to the dear-old-mother-earth footçase.

“Well, to get back to Darwin again. I cannot see where he gets his idea of man descending from a monkey or some such animal. I believe that man has always existed as man since creation. What perceptible difference is there in physical man of the present day and physical man since he learned to write about himself—I mean since the time of our earliest historians? Or take it later, even in the Alexandrian age about seven hundred years B. C. That was a great age of learning, I may be pardoned in adding. The city of Alexandria alone had a library of seven hundred thousand volumes. This would make some modern cities proud to own, and contemplate if you can what an irreparable loss civilization sustained at the wanton destruction of this gigantic collection of ancient knowledge. Well, physical man has not changed since then, not one iota,

and mentally very little. Now if man was changing there would be a notable change in nearly three thousand years. I could go back further than this but it would be the same. Man has not changed physically in four thousand years as a race or as a species of animal. Man is a very delicate and easily deranged organism, and it stands to reason if he was changing he would show it somewhat at the end of all these years. The only change taking place in man is the temporary changes that circumstances drive him to for a couple of generations. The follies he falls into so easily in one generation he usually abhors in the next generation or so. He always gets back to where he started from physically. Breeding has a good deal to do with this, as the tall man weds a short woman, the sickly man weds a robust healthy woman, and the thin man a fat woman, and vice versa, this being so ordained by nature, as the tall man sees more to admire in the short woman by reason of his tallness. It is that inborn desire to get what is forbidden us handed down from Mother Eve

so long ago. And the offspring of these unions are normal human beings as a rule. Then also when a husband goes wrong the wife is good by contrast, as bad makes good. If we had no evil by what standard could we judge good? Nature corrects the deformed man in her own good time, if she has anything to work on, if she has not then he goes to the dust and is no more. It so happens that whole races of men, after being wasted by their excesses, are thus weighed in the balance and found wanting, then they go down before a greater race, as did the nations of old repeatedly."

"Now we have another question that before you gentlemen arrived we were talking over," said Franklin. "How does our present civilization compare with that of the fourteenth to the eighteenth centuries? Can you not help us a little on this?"

"Is our civilization to be compared with that of the fourteenth to the eighteenth centuries? From my point of view a comparison would be in favor of the earlier centuries," said Richard. "We are far behind the Medieval era, so

far in fact that I marvel that more sensible people have not declared themselves before this. We are far behind them in culture, great literature, and great art, have no place in the make-up of the modern world or the present twentieth century. Real art still stays with Michael Angelo, Rembrandt, and the old Greeks and Romans; great literature died with Shakespeare, Milton—of course Longfellow, Holmes, and Hawthorne resurrected it in the new world, but we have no such men nowadays. All that is written now is sensational nonsense, something to fire the imagination of the misguided masses. Look around. Can you find a satisfied man, woman or child? No need of me to ask. The trouble lies in too much excitement, too much short-lived literature, nothing lasting, no food for thought or reason. And art, all we make nowadays to call art, is flashing lithographs that are here today and gone tomorrow. I could go on, and cry down this wild civilization."

"Well now, Richard," said Cyril, "don't you think you are putting it too hard? What

do you say about our mechanical improvements? Think of Stevenson, Fulton, Morse, and our electrical inventors, are they not great men?"

"Oh! yes," answered Richard, "they were great men, and no doubt good Christian men, but do you know, my friend, that these same men have done more to take men from the Christian religion than almost any other group of men you could name? You want the reason? Well, here it is. They have taken men far away from nature and from nature's God. By inventing the steam locomotive men have been hurled hundreds of miles in as many minutes; they have been drawn from one hot bed of sin and disease to another with but a passing glimpse of God's world, the woods, the green fields, the mountains. All they can think of is rush for gold in the hot cities. They have no time to rest the train starts them off, the telegraphs, the telephone, the high speed engines, in all walks of life, keep them going until they drop in their tracks unprepared for the great Beyond. Take the factories, the mills. The

owners are trying to cut the price of production by getting the highest speed out of every machine—and what is there in any man-made machine to make the operator think of the great future? If the same man was out under the great canopy of Heaven he would have to think once in a while at least of the great power that made him."

"What you say is undoubtedly true to a greater or lesser extent," said Cyril. "You will agree with me that there is nothing under the sun that is not composed of animal or vegetable life. Even the iron that made the engines you speak of, the telegraph, the telephone, all these metals are mined out of mother earth, so why is not a person in the different occupations as near to nature as the farmer? What the masses need is education."

"It is useless," said Richard, "to argue this matter any longer. You are descending to the ridiculous in saying that the masses must be educated, which you know is impossible. Have not wiser men than you said the same thing years ago? And are we any nearer a solution

of the problem than we were a hundred years ago? No, we are not and in fact, we are farther away, as I have been trying to tell you."

"But look here," exclaimed Cyril. "Have we not more colleges, a hundred-fold more than we had a hundred years back? Have we not ninety-five per cent. more men and women that can read and write today than a hundred years ago? Do not these facts speak for themselves?"

"Agreed," answered Richard, "that we have more schools and colleges, and perhaps have ninety-five per cent. more people who can read and write their own name. What matters it if a youth or old man can read and write the English language if he cannot make any sense out of it? Where are your deep thinkers of today? Please show me a single one to compare with Shakespeare. What good does so much education do to such people as these that cannot reason, that have no judgment, that have not the capacity to digest even Robinson Crusoe? It is only a few of the boys who go to college that you ever hear from again. Some die of

brain fever, caused by over-study, the brain not having the clear reasoning power that it ought to have if the poor boy is going to learn anything. The young man is undoubtedly the scion of a rich family who has been left to the care of an ignorant maid. He has not been allowed the company of his parents or child friends, and consequently his brain lies undeveloped, not in the least way prepared for its work later on. Some children are fortunate enough to have one intelligent person within reach, this child if there is anything in him will make his mark, but he is one in a hundred thousand. Environment is a great thing in the early make-up of a young boy, that is where the Medieval knight had the best of our would-be high cultured citizen of today.

“Some of the highly cultured wait around for the ‘old man to kick the bucket’ and still others abuse their learning by misleading the less intelligent masses. For instance, crime is held up to us as a beacon light. Its most harrowing details are exposed to our view in glaring headlines on our modern newspaper.

It is written up by corps of writers especially drilled to cater to the morbid and evil-minded. The more revolting the crime, the more times the details are repeated on the front page. You must say these writers are learned, no doubt they are graduates from Harvard or Yale, or some other great college. They have a great education, but what do they do with it, barter it for a mess of pottage. It would be far better for the world if these fellows, who use the Instruments of Light to darken men's minds, were left in complete ignorance. Their natural ability would make them good citizens, but give them the delicate tools to work with and they spoil the whole mould."

"Well," said Cyril, "you have a nice argument, but I fail to see where we are going to better ourselves. According to you we are retrograding instead of going ahead, as all our historians say. Are all these fellows wrong? If so, how can we believe former chronicles?"

"I base my argument on conditions as they are, no matter who says this or that is not right," replied Richard. "Can you not in your

inner mind agree with me on the question of education?"

"Yes, and no," answered Cyril. "I will have to put it that way. What you said regarding the scion of a rich family is without doubt true but the great majority of the people that can read and write can understand Robinson Crusoe and lots of other literature."

"Not so," said Richard. "I say they cannot understand Robinson Crusoe, or will not; with a large number of persons it is that they cannot, with others, they will not. People at the age of twenty-five are either strong-willed or weak. The strong-willed person will run over this kind of literature and throw it down with the remark 'kindergarten' and grab a blood and thunder novel and go into raptures over it. The weak one will look it over and could not tell why Crusoe called his man 'Friday.' Now the reasonable one, the man with common sense, that 'most uncommon sense' as Ben Franklin says, would read it all, and give you a sensible reason for every action of Robinson Crusoe's. That's the way to digest a

book that has gone down through the ages, alive with interest for every boy who is to make an impression on this old world."

Here Richard crossed his legs and lighted a fresh cigar, saying as he did so, "Gentlemen, I have finished my rambling for this meeting. Hope that you have been able to glean a little wheat from so much dross; you will probably not gather as much as did Ruth in the field of Boaz, but it is not because I have not tried to leave a sheaf here and there. If you are still without a few solid grains of truth, it is because I could not give them, as I have done my best."

"Yes," said Franklin, "you have put some things in a very strange light, but I don't think you were very far from the naked truth. If men will look at some of the absurdities that the public are forced to live under at the present day, in their true light, there are a good many who will agree with you. Cyril has also distinguished himself this time, and we have reason to congratulate ourselves that we have two such members of this club to call

on for information pertaining to the emancipation of men from the deadly rush of modern life. We will be pleased to have the valued opinion of Mr. Graham, our latest member on the discussion."

"Well, of course," said Graham, "the club was organized for the purpose of learning the best way to live and enjoy the good things of life and enjoy them in the best way possible. We are all trying to get at this great secret, and while I think Richard and Cyril are a little wild at times, in the main I agree with them. This is the only way I see of helping the people out of the mire they have fallen into. Perhaps Mr. Wheeler will give us his opinion on the subject also."

Mr. Wheeler arose, saying:

"Well, gentlemen, I think Richard has covered the ground pretty well, and I do not doubt that he will do more to help make the way plainer to plain people, and thus raise them up for more enlightenment. We must dispel all false illusions before we can get at the truth of matter. This the club is trying to

do. In the first place Richard and Cyril have attacked what to them and to the club appear to be false doctrines. These we have attacked and will ultimately down, but it will be a very hard struggle for a handful of men to down so-called new ideas and new improvements. They seem to be bred in the bone as surely as insincerity is included in modern civilization. It will take more brilliant arguments and more writings to instill into the modern mind that we can live without so much falseness, but we must show the faults before we can help the faulty."

"Can we not hear from Mr. Venner?" asked Cyril.

Mr. Venner arose saying: "Cyril has asked my opinion. All that I can say is that we have all got a lot to learn."

"I have gotten things so mixed up I really don't know where I stand on the matter," drawled the last remaining member, and he yawned and promptly fell asleep in his chair.

"I think," said Cyril, "we had better adjourn this meeting indefinitely."

“Oh! no!” exclaimed Mr. Wheeler, “we will not give up what has already been accomplished by reason of two members not showing the interest they should at once. These fellows have studied with us but have not yet grasped the theme of this discussion. They will be able to out-do us perhaps in a short time. Meanwhile I will put them through a course of training that will at least keep them awake. Next week we shall all study Burke, Ruskin and Darwin. These will broaden their ideas. But we must be careful to regulate these boys’ tuition or they will be as bad as some of the men of learning and no knowledge that we have been discussing.”

Chapter II

IT WAS a beautiful afternoon late in September. The sun was well over in the west, giving a golden edge to the shrubs and giant elms in the grounds of the old hall of the Sphinx Club. The grass took on a darker green; the gravel walks even seemed paved with pearls and diamonds in the glow of the waning sun; the air was clear and refreshing; such a day only as one will find in grand Old New England in the late summer.

The members of the club had gathered under the spreading elm trees, as was their wont at this time of the year. Seated on a rustic settee were Messrs. Franklin, Wheeler and Graham. Cyril occupied a part of the garden wheelbarrow, Richard sat on the moss covered stump of an ancient maple, Mr. Venner sat very upright in the only rustic chair on the grounds, while the "last remaining member"

reclined in a luxurious hammock smoking cigarettes and yawning at intervals.

"As the formalities," said Graham, "of calling the meetings of this club to order are never indulged in since we have no officers, it is the privilege of each member to ask another to express his opinions on the subject under discussion. I will ask Richard to tell us something more about our 'modern improvements' and what they may lead to; whether they be for the good or evil import in their workings for man and his needs."

"Great riches," said Wheeler, "are one of the contending elements of society also."

"And I think," said Franklin, "individual man is counting for less and less in this whirlwind of rapid transit civilization. These questions, I hope, will be taken up at some length this afternoon."

"Mr. Venner and I," said Cyril, "are going to ask questions as usual, with the permission of the speaker." Venner said he would be a good listener anyway.

A yawn and a volume of smoke from the

direction of the hammock assured the company that this member was not quite asleep as yet.

"As you fellows call on me so often," said Richard, "I have developed a desire to shirk a little and can only treat the subjects brought up briefly as I have no memorandum nor data, but will endeavor to show some of the evils of too much 'improving' or abnormal development, and we know that great riches have always upset the equilibrium of all races of men. Another well-known fact is that the individual man loses his individuality as the per cent of unholy and wicked practices increase in his daily life.

"Modern improvements, so-called, are at the expense of physical man. Farming, for instance, is being so simplified that one man can cultivate one hundred acres in the western plains with the aid of modern machinery, when ten acres would be more than he could do with the old farming implements, that made brain and muscle, that made reverence for the laws of nature and of man, kept down the baser elements in the human animal by arduous

labor as it was meant to be. If one man does the work of every ten, supplies that ten with food, which is all that man actually needs, or is possible for him to have, what do the idle ones do? They get together in large numbers, build a city and establish a 'commerce,' or trade, or gamble over the products of the few farmers, set up a code of laws and try to keep each other from breaking them. Some of them try to get all the land in sight within the city limits to enable them to gamble a little harder than their fellows. Another class finds a mineral in the earth, shows it to somebody else; this person thinks it nice and they barter over it, cheat each other and then cheat other men who wish some of it. Thus is produced the maze of endless cheating, gambling and robbing which is carried on under the head of 'legitimate business.'

"How well the ancient Greeks knew the evil of commercialism is shown vividly in their naming one of their most important divinities as the god of eloquence, commerce and robbers! These triplets have been together

since their birth. It is impossible to separate them. What does this continual wrestling and wrangling do to man? It dwarfs him physically mentally and morally. Man not using his muscles, nature takes them away. Man using his mind for base schemes surely degrades it, he leaves it open to every evil wind that blows."

"I believe," said Cyril, "you said some time ago that physical man did not change."

"You must not," answered Richard, "forget the fact that I am not talking about the whole world, but a large and misguided part. There will still be enough left somewhere on our globe to jump down on this mass of confusion and blot it out as of yore when the time comes. You recall, do you not, the 'temporary changes' I mentioned? A hundred years is little in the building of a nation—and man, as his abilities to use his strength diminish tries to make a device or 'improvement' to help him in his weakness, and in so doing he creates a want in another direction more vital than the first deficiency, and I may here state that improvements at this time are caused by the loss of

nature's blessings, she having taken away such as he failed to make a just and proper use of. This is one of the laws of nature that man cannot overcome in the least semblance, in fact it is impossible to transgress the laws of nature without paying the penalty sooner or later. Then as we know absolutely that this is so, why do we not live as nature directs and enjoy the good things of life, instead of doing things that are sure to bring discontent and short life as nature's revenge.

"Now the human existence on this planet is not for the purpose of torment in some form or another. As conditions are today the average civilized human being has to take two-thirds evil with every dose of good. This is not as it should be. Well, now, as we certainly know that man can only have what he can eat and drink and wear, everything else is superficial and unnecessary and of no use to him, thus his needs can easily be provided for. This great truth that man's needs are simple is the great secret of the human happiness on this earth, and the sooner this is inculcated into the

minds and hearts of the people, the sooner we will have a contented and happy population of strong, noble and long-lived men. 'Of what use to a man if he win the whole world and lose his own soul?' Why have the care and constant worry of great houses and great equipages? It is more ennobling to work with the hands than to work with the brain constantly in such small matters as caring for a house in the city, a house in the country, a house at the sea-shore, with their endless regime demanded by the devil's constitution called 'style.' Use your brain for this and such like nonsense and you have no room for the great thoughts that uplift humanity. This is one of the chief causes of man's losing his soul. He allows these cares to quench what little real manhood the business life has left in him. 'Fill your measure full of chaff and there is no room for the grain.'

"Most men become specialists at maturity in the line of thought that they have been driven to or voluntarily adopted. People say 'so and so is born to such a profession.' This is a relic of the old time superstition. Each and

every one of us is born to each and every one of the 'professions.' No person ever looked on a master painting without a desire to do likewise if he could. No person ever gazed upon a great architectural triumph without a desire to create himself if it were his opportunity. He knows what one man can do he can do under like training to a greater or lesser degree, if he be a normal man. It is these mean little things that luxurious living creates, to destroy a man's capacity to do great things, thus the reason for people saying 'he was born to it,' when they see the result of Napoleonic hard work. There was no more systematic worker than this man. He could not do little things because he did so many to make the perfect whole that man could not see the small achievements that resulted in the crowning victory. If Napoleon had been an artist he would have been a master, because he would have worked hard to bring out every detail to a symmetrical conclusion. If Napoleon had been an architect he would have been a great architect, doing

his work with the same precision as he marshalled his army.

“It is needless for me to recall to memory any part of the countless great nations that have been crushed into the earth as a result of their extravagant man-killing excesses, brought about by the building of great cities and the collecting by the populations thereof of great riches, and a consequent greater number of diseases caused by idle hands. Brave men in disuse soon become cowards. Great luxury and great riches should be unknown. What is all this display of riches and jewelry? What are these diamonds, these rubies, these great castles with their gorgeous equipments, elegant grounds, their expensive autos, their gilded turn-outs? It is because you and I have put a price on these things, put a value on them. We consider them ‘par excellence.’ We might just as well put our valued opinion on things of practical use. Better make necklaces and dog collars of coal. Diamonds are of no use. We cannot eat them, neither can we derive heat in winter from them. But you can warm

your cold body with coal. Diamonds are useless carbon, coal is useful carbon.

“Man should be his own valet, his own farmer, his own workman. I read a glowing account of some of our millionaires finding an isolated spot down on the coast of the Sunny South cut off from the cities and towns, where they can go and ‘hide away’ from the cares of business life. They have no telephone and telgraph lines, no railroads, so no market reports or telegrams can come to break into the ‘millionaires’ paradise,’ and the writer goes on to say that the millionaires go boating, fishing and hunting, lie in the hammocks and idly while away the time in the cool shade, or play outdoor games, etc.

“Here you can readily see that a millionaire cannot have any more real pleasure than you and I might have right in this country town. We can go fishing, hunting, boating, and come back with a better appetite than these men who do not do enough of the right kind of work to keep their digestive organs in good order. When a man wins a million or so he is used up

physically. He has won a lot of gold and paid for it with his health. In his attempt to cheat nature he finds he himself is the one who is cheated. He builds a great house in one of our large cities, collects everything money can buy, puts it into the house. Just as he thinks he is going to enjoy his hard or otherwise earned dollars nature steps in and demands her own and he is no more. What becomes of the great house or castle he has built? It does not suit the fastidious ideas of his self-indulgent offspring. They sell the great paintings, the great plate, and all the wonderful things along with the estate. It gets into other hands, is pulled to pieces. This great work of this great man is torn into shreds, and not one stone of this great costly pile is left one upon another, that this man gave his whole life in building. He and all his work is forgotten in a generation. Is the price worth paying? Is it not as easy to eat from a china plate as from a silver one? The food will taste as good to a man with a healthy body.

“It is due to the mistaken idea that man has

as to the fitness of things. His ideas of advancement are wrong, but he cannot see it because he is so susceptible to fads. The ravishing delight of a new sensation intoxicates him, blinds his reason and destroys his common sense. He sees only the surface of things. He does not care to investigate for himself, and thus fails of his birthright. If he only knew that the height of human attainment in this world is to arrive at simplicity, he would live right and enjoy the world as it was meant he should.

“My ideal civilization would no doubt appear as ridiculous as did the Wooden Horse of ancient Troy to the common mind. As I know that man’s needs are simple, so would be my civilization. It was Socrates who said ‘To be simple in one’s needs is to be like unto the gods.’ Socrates, Plato, Solon, these great Greek philosophers championed the simple life as man’s salvation. John Milton advocated the same, as did Ruskin and our own ‘Platonic’ Emerson.

"All great nations have been stricken down in their youth or early manhood, as it was at this period of their existence that they became artificial, fell away from nature, where they got their power, and thus lost all. My men would live near to nature's heart at once and for all time. Everything that man has on his table comes from the ground, this being so he can supply himself. There will be little need of the evil business or 'commercialism' as it is carried on at the present time. The individual man would have found himself out; crime and disease would be stamped out.

"One of the great producers of moral and physical degeneration in this age is the fact of man's losing his individuality. For example: he gets into one of our large cities, stands on the curb in a main thoroughfare and watches the surging to and fro of the crowd. Of how little consequence he is to the world is forced upon him with tremendous power. He forgets that the world was made for him and that he is the noblest of all God's work. He starts breaking the laws of humanity, because he says

to himself, 'I am no one anyway, and I can do as I please and no one will be the wiser. No one knows me in this great crowd.' And thus the restraint of the country town and of home and friends is gone and he is only curbed by the police into cat-like observance of the laws. He does not live within the laws from a desire to be honest as he would if he were in his native town. This is the wicked worm that is eating at the vitals of our people. Man in a large city will do a multitude of evil things that he would not dream of in the country. It is the same old demon that caused the destruction of every nation at a certain stage in its development. They 'harden their hearts against the Lord,' or rather, throw reason and common sense to the winds and undertake to live against all healthful laws contrary to nature, leaving themselves open to destruction at the hands of the 'Barbarians of the North' as did the great and glorious Empire of the Romans."

"Accordingly," remarked Cyril, "we must all become primitive cave men or barbarous

children of the wild wood to live in accordance with your ideas."

"Do not put it that way," answered Richard, "get down to the happy medium. What I hold as the best for humanity is that state that always follows the great wars, the great destruction of life and property; the reconstruction period, the creating of a desire to build up again on solid foundations that which has been ruthlessly torn asunder, the result of a great victory to a nation. Each and every man feels solid, feels that he can build his home and country on a rock now that he has won lasting peace. It is the same grand feeling that the pioneer has as he hews his home out of the forest. He feels that he is doing something worthy of a strong and noble man, and he is. It is that period of life we call youth in nations. That is the ideal condition of which I speak. We must not go beyond this stage. We can have art, literature and all the good things necessary to a high intellectual development, but we must give the animal body work to do to keep it up with the development of the mind.

The mind and the body must work together as it was meant to be. Each can run ahead of the other for a time only to be brought back at a terrible cost. Such as one great people crushing out the life of another as history repeatedly records. When the mind gets abnormal in its development it becomes corrupt and rends the puny body with every kind of evil passion until both perish in the common ruin."

"You recall, do you not," asked Cyril, "Dante, Napoleon, Carlisle—Milton was blind, the little monk who caused the first Crusade—these were great men, but not great in bodily strength. I could speak of others."

"Exceptions, my dear Cyril," said Richard, "there are exceptions to all rules. I judge from the texture of the whole people. These exceptions we call philosophers, geniuses, they are our wise men. But we must work out the problems for the whole people. You cannot make philosophers out of a hundred million souls. They are nature's children all, and but a rare few can see nature more clearly. Thus

we have Shakespeare, Dante, Milton, Carlisle, etc., but even these are not of our thoughtless age.

"Carlisle once said 'There are millions of people in Great Britian, mostly fools.' This sage philosopher could have explained himself more clearly if he had said that the people were blind to nature's gifts, causing them much useless suffering by huddling millions into small areas, such as London, leaving large tracts of land practically unoccupied. There was no more ardent lover of nature than Carlisle. He lived in close communion with her while tilling the fields of his rural home. What he said about England I could say of America. We have thousands of acres of unused land and millions of people packed into our cities wasting their manhood and losing their heritage in their vain worship of Mammon."

As the occupant of the hammock had arisen to a sitting position Richard paused and looking at him said, "Mr. Brown, express yourself. We will all be pleased to hear from you, as I

judge from your looks you wish to say something on the subject."

"I wish to say," said Brown, "that civilized men have forever been trying to better their condition. It matters not where you find them, in palace or hovel, at the goal or far behind in life's race. In this case I think I should quote the old adage 'Where ignorance is bliss it is folly to be wise.' Man can know too much. He can know too much of one subject by not having enough of the counteracting knowledge to evenly balance him. In modern civilization the goal is gaul and wormwood, victory is defeat, man's highest aims end in grief. So he keeps forever seeking light, and he will until he finds it, God bless him. False prophets arise on every hand. He follows them as long as they can hold out any light in his direction. Some he drops at once, but others dazzle him and he follows blindly until he runs against a stone wall. There is that unattainable something that keeps the human mind and body unsatisfied. I believe if civilized man would heed nature's laws, adhere to honesty in all things, live up to

his conscience complete, he would answer the unattainable with the word attained. The goal would be a goal indeed, and victory would be victory."

"True words, well spoken," said Richard.

"If a man live up to the teachings of his conscience he will live up to the laws of nature, as conscience is the natural instructor of this human race. Well, gentlemen, I move we go into executive session for half an hour, have a smoke talk and adjourn."

The move was seconded, and the vote was unanimous in favor of the motion.

Chapter III

IT WAS a cool evening in the fall, one of those evenings that drives the New England villager against his will to seek the warmth of the house at an early hour, for at this time of the year it is not only cold, but the sun sets early. The heavens darken and the general aspect of the frost-bitten earth is uninviting for an after dark vigil. The members of the Sphinx Club came into the old hall one by one, threw off their outer coats and drew up to the huge fireplace, the red glow of the fire casting a beautiful light on their faces, and silhouetting their figures far back against the ancient wall.

Cyril was the last to enter the door and remove his great coat. As he did so he gazed at his friends in front of the fireplace, the easy, graceful pose of Richard, the stiff and erect Mr. Venner, the reclining Brown, the

easy-going Graham, the listening attitude of Wheeler, the conservative Franklin. Glancing from his friends he followed their shadows to the walls, gazing at them for a moment, he said, "My friends, allow me to become a little prophetic this evening. As I see Richard's shadow over-cast the bust of the great Shakespeare, so let his fame shine with that of this greatest of scholars of human nature, and the fame of Mr. Venner can shut out that of Dante as easily as his shadow covers the bust of this black minded hermit. Brown will have to liven up in order to cover the dashing reputation of the famous Black Prince, won on the bloody field of Crescy, as his shadow extends over the surface of the picture of this noble prince. Graham must overshadow Frederick the Great. You can readily do this, get into a scrape with the women. Now I see Wheeler must eclipse Alfred the Great. This is no easy task, as this man did more for the English-speaking race than any before or since him. His translation of the Bible alone puts him far in advance of all other great men.

Well, Wheeler, your shadow covers but a small portion of this great King's portrait, so I will let you off easy. Franklin's task is a great one if he is to outshine Julius Caesar. There, there, old fellow, don't shift your position, it may be easier to accomplish your task than you think. Perhaps you have already done your work. I believe a man living an honest existence as you are has completely overshadowed this ambitious man. His work has gone, buried with him, and all we have is a memory. With you we have a just man, an honest citizen, and a living man, of far more power at the present moment than a thousand dead Caesars."

Cyril had now moved to the vacant chair awaiting him.

"I take exceptions to your prophetic vision," said Richard. "As I was the first victim I will be the first to condemn you, for I know I am the greatest sufferer. To compare me with Shakespeare is to compare a toad with an elephant."

"And I," said Venner, "would make a very

poor figure to be gazed at by future generations, beside the dark, passionate, sublime Dante. Perhaps I am a victim of women's wiles, but I could not put up such a kick against them as did this king of dreamers."

Brown yawned, stretched himself, saying, "I would not exert one muscle to become a dozen Black Princes."

"It is hardly fair for you to give me the task of telling some young lady she is 'too fat,'" said Graham. "I could not condemn thousands of innocent human beings to death for the fun of 'sassing' three women."

"In my case," said Wheeler, "if I succeed in translating the views as put forth by the Sphinx Club to my own understanding, I will be perfectly satisfied with life."

"And I do not wish to share the fate of Julius Caesar. No daggers for me," said Franklin. "I would be a brave man and have taken my wife's advice and not gone to the Senate chamber on that fateful day."

"Well, I know prophets are of no use in their own country," said Cyril. "Never have

the soothsayers when applied to, helped the applicant to anything good. The Witch of Endor only foretold Saul's downfall. Macbeth's three evil spirits told of his undoing, so I am profoundly grateful, my comrades, that you do not call on me for any further information regarding your futures."

"Our future is a sealed book to us all," said Venner. "We know not what tomorrow will bring forth and it is far better thus. But, Cyril, I note your own shadow overcasts the portrait of Alexander the Great. You will have to drop some of your sarcastic reasoning to draw your sword and cut the Gordian knot in twain. Alexander was a passionate slasher who fought it out and reasoned afterwards."

"And that was the cause of his early death," commented Cyril.

"Since we have again arrived in the neighborhood of Athens, I would ask why sculpture was seemingly so neccessary to the ancient Greek?" asked Franklin, "and is so conspicuous by its absence in our own century?"

"Because it was their language," said Cyril.

"Their everyday speech. They could not build a palace, neither could they build a slave house without it. No more could they erect a temple. Every household shrine was a sculptured image. Sculpture was their religion. I have often thought that the Greeks misused art by making sculpture so common; they seemed to live on clay dust."

"But, my dear Cyril," said Richard, "we need sculpture today. It is as necessary to us as it was to the Greeks. What more peaceful, more happy, more healthful, more brave, more great people than the art-loving Greeks. Their streets were lined with sculptured images of their gods and their great public men. Everywhere was this poetic expression of thought. Athens was the center of all the greatest clay-workers that the world had ever seen. Every beautiful thought was pictured in clay or spread on canvas. Why could not the Greeks become typical freemen and their civilization lead the world, when they adopted such forceful yet gentle laws as these.

"Art is the supreme regulator of brute na-

ture. The tremendous swollen rivers dash down the mountain sides carrying boulders weighing hundreds of tons and giant trees with them, as if they were but feathers, but as soon as this great torrent reaches the plain, it instantly subsides into quiet placid rivers. Art is like the valley plain. The strongest forces fall down and worship in the presence of her graceful figure. She is irresistible, for she portrays all that is glorious in nature. The divine in all things call upon her to interpret themselves unto man. Art is the mirror of nature. Art makes 'all the world akin.' "

"You believe then," asked Cyril, "that if each and every one of us take a chisel and attack a boulder we will thereby establish a perfect civilized state?"

"I believe," said Richard, "if we each study the grand and beautiful in nature work down the animal spirits to their rational level, not let any one passion devour us, we will soon reach the ideal state.

"All great thinkers agree on one point,—that of the wonderful early Greek civilization.

Creasy says, 'that the mission of imperial Rome was in truth already accomplished, she had received and transmitted the civilization of Greece.' He tells us this in giving the causes of her defeat at the hands of Arminius marking the turning point of her mighty power. I could question this statement as I consider Imperial Rome received a large part of the Grecian manners and customs, but she did not receive the real Grecian civilization, in fact the Greeks themselves could not give what they had already destroyed. When Rome rose, Athens was in ruins. She may have been as she is today, a populated city, but not the learned Athens of old. Her true Grecian civilization was in ruins as surely as was the glorious Carthage. If Greece had kept her high standard of culture there would have been no Rome. For she had solved the problem of humanity and was irresistible, when she threw this great secret away is when she fell. While Rome patterned after the Athenians she had a lower grade of civilization. Even at the pinnacle of her greatness her cul-

ture was marred by great corruption, and consequently of a much lower cast than the Greek. Those grand truths commonly called 'Greek myths' were unthought of in Rome. She could not have originated such theories as these. She did not have the mental capacity. And there has been no nation to equal Greece in this searching and finding of these great laws of Nature.

"Early Greece still teaches the nations of the earth. Scientists continually make great discoveries only to be disputed by the Greek scholar who can in almost every case show him that his find is only 'new' unto himself, that the Greeks had been there ages before him. The only difference being that he and those like him call the Greek knowledge 'myths,' where he calls his 'practical theory and very possible truth,' and I know of no better way of comparing our pompous culture, largely due to our great scientific researches, than to take down these cobweb-covered, much neglected 'myths' and see how closely any real knowledge our men have found com-

pare with these great 'mythological' truths recorded centuries ago.

"It was only when great luxury and great riches came and brought their 'dry rot' that the Greeks perished. While they worked stone and moulded clay, and tilled the soil, they had the most perfect civilization the world has ever seen. But when they brought their captives home from the wars and made them do all the work while they strutted about their cities thinking themselves too refined for manual labor, then it was that they began to dig their own graves, as the idle hands and minds soon were inventing base schemes of treason, plunder and murder of their own brothers. It is ever thus, the ending of all nations comes about in this way.

"Ridpath says, 'the ancient Roman even of the highest rank was himself a laborer.' When I say 'ancient' I mean the period of the real greatness of Rome. Her early republican history, not the blown up bag of foul gases represented by the latter days of Octavius Caesar Augustus, pierced by the heroic German in

the marshes of the Lippe and the Ems. When the Romans ceased to labor with their hands as well as their minds, then began their undoing as of the Greeks."

"In your recent discourse on modern life I notice you lay particular stress on the evils of riches," said Cyril. "You are not leaning towards socialistic doctrines, are you, friend Richard? "

"No, no," said Richard. "How many times will I tell you it is the extremes that are ruinous. I would not and could not throw down the law. I stand for law and order above all things. We cannot live without law, without restraint. There is too much brute force to be resisted, and resistance is necessary for the development of mind and body. There is law and order in the whole universe. What I try to point out is the abnormal in things. These are the abuses I would correct.

"There are distinctions that must be made. There must be classes. Some men are better in some lines of work than others and merit a greater reward. Some persons are very dull

and others very sharp witted. But you must curb them all at times, or like a fine horse they will run away with you and jump over a precipice and hurl themselves and you to destruction.

“Cræsus became so rich that he could think of nothing but adding to his pile by good means or bad, and showing himself and his wonderful treasures off to other men to gloat over their envy and amazement. He was soon, however, overthrown and all his wealth went to swell the coffers of Cyrus the Great. The history of Lydia is the history of all nations and as the individual man makes the nations so does he make history. It is the great middle class that carries on all good government, that does the business of the country, that upholds the majesty of the law, that carries the mental, moral, physical and religious standards for a nation, in fact, the middle or moderate class is the heart, the soul and the body of every nation. The extremes, whether they be the very rich or the very poor, exert no influence in these matters, unless they

succeed in corrupting this middle class. When this occurs the nation soon disappears from the face of the earth, or it sometimes happens that after a terrible convulsion it may succeed in mending itself in some degree by casting off these drones. It is the stimulus, the degree of simplicity that creates the ambitions that this great class have, that equalize all differences in the growth of national life. Their industry, their thrift, their manual labor, this is the magic wand that guides the mighty races of men to great and noble deeds.

“The misinterpretation of history, great events, great battles, a single figure presents itself as the sole being in the controversy when it is the movement of the whole people. Individuals often guide these great actions of a mighty population of a country, but he must direct them in their own way, study the nation and do as it wishes, if he is to hold his sway. The greatest individual power ever held over a nation was wielded by the Emperor of the French, not the King of France. Napoleon was made Emperor of the people by the

people, and none knew this better than he. It is by the consent of the people that they are ruled, and always have been. If a despot has sat on the neck of a people, it was because the people were despotic.

"Socialistic doctrines complicate civilization so much that it would require another deluge to destroy mankind and begin anew, and even then we would have to eliminate Old Noah, create a new being entirely to live up to this standard of thinking."

"Friend Richard," asked Cyril, "will you tell me the reason you compare modern civilization with that of the old Romans? Can you not find a comparison as suitable to you at a later period in the world's history? Why go so far back? Have we not been making history ever since the fall of Rome?"

"I cannot find," said Richard, "any age of these latter times to compare us with other than I have already used to some extent in one of our earlier sessions. We of today have very little in common with the Dark Ages. After Greece and Rome man returned to his

lowest nature. A certain well-known historian says 'Rome was followed by chaos, confusion and night.' This is true from the fourth century to the ninth. Then we see a virtuous deed performed, or a short space of time when noble deeds are appreciated. This period stands out as a single star in the hideous black night of the middle ages previous to the fourteenth century. This is the Feudal age. The spirit that bids the Feudal knight speed out on the road to punish the oppressor, to lift up and defend and die if need be for the weak, was divine. The reverence and profound respect that the Medieval knight had for the weak and aged was sublime. These two cardinal virtues of this age we would do well to copy. I can almost forgive his crimes as I think of his noble acts in defence of his honor. This knight of contradictions.

"What a striking illustration we get of the sentiment of these times in the sad but beautiful love story of the philosopher Abelard and the lovely Heloise—the monk teaching the maiden philosophy, the maiden teaching the

monk love, and the benighted age teaching them both sad disappointment and hopeless despair. Then we have nothing but chaos and confusion handed down to us by the Crusaders.

"In the early part of the twelfth century we have the inauguration of that gentle persuading institution the Inquisition with its Chamber of Horrors organized for the extinction of the Albergenses in France, an invention for inhumane cowardly cruelty and dastardly murder unequalled by man since Creation.

"This century also furnishes the Sicilian Vespers or the massacre of the French Protestants in Italy.

"France paints another black picture for us in 1572. Thirty thousand Huguenots are butchered in cold blood on St. Bartholomew's night. France has never recovered from this mortal wound she gave herself at this time. And following we have 'wars and rumors of wars.' Think of the bloody useless wars of the Roses, and that devil in human form, Richard III, and his crimes. The fifteenth

century gives us a ray of light, the rising sun of the New World and Reformation appears on the horizon never to set. There is little in these ages to compare us with. We are Greeks and Romans all, therefore my going back to the Greeks and Romans for my humble illustrations."

"One striking feature of American civilization is the congregation of practically all races of men under one government," said Graham. "Is that to our advantage?"

"This condition is practically new," said Richard, "and to my mind it is to our disadvantage. I have a little original verse touching on this point somewhat that may explain my view of the subject. It may be a mistaken one, but here it is:

Under the arched elms of an old New England road,
Towards his native town a lonely figure strode,
Large of hand, great sinewy arms, ponderous feet,
Such strength of arm and character we rarely meet,
Forehead high, steel gray eye and square of chin,
A normal New Englander, undipped in sin,
An Ulysses searching for his native land,
But in Ithaca, the suitors are in command,

Penelope lost, Corruption holds sway
 Over this quiet country hamlet night and day.
 As the Traveller draws near his natal hearth
 He meets men and women of every birth;
 Americans all, and freemen too;
 Some tightly grasp the Eagle, others say "Shoo!"
 Looking at the group he can scarce repress a frown,
 And he, in turn, thro' Italia's eyes looks like a clown,
 And thro' petit France's creates disgust,
 Makes Portugal's simple countrymen afraid,
 Turns straight the oblique eye who to look essayed,
 Fires up dull Poland's leaden eyes,
 The ancient Hun declares "he's from the skies,"
 The Syrian, the Russian, and the Turk,
 With wonderous eyes gaze on this noble work
 Of God, of goodly living, of old days,
 When men lived for a purpose in true ways,
 The drones of Southern Europe with some from
 Northern parts
 Are here to answer Greed's call with stinging darts,
 To obey the gesture of Fate's ominous hand,
 To traverse, to linger, and grow fat in this fair land.
 We are a Mecca for the dregs of Earth,
 While we laugh and shout in delirious mirth,
 Cry aloud defiance of all Natural law,
 So much wrong exalt, so much right ignore.

 We know that at the decline of Athens the

shiftless wanderers from every part of the world swarmed into Greece.

"At the fall of Carthage her streets were full of foreigners, in fact, I believe Hannibal owes his defeat by the Romans to the poor quality of his troops. He had very few Carthagians in his last army. They were too busy heaping up riches, or too lazy to leave their luxurious abodes to fight for their country. They would buy substitutes among the new comers pouring in from every country, in fine, the Carthagians had become too corrupt to have any regard for what befell their country until it was too late. And Rome in her turn was sapped by this same agency.

"At the fall of Rome every known tongue was heard in her city's streets, some being brought as captives, others allowed to come to work in the fields and workshops to supplant the now pleasure-loving and debase Romans, who disdained to do manual labor."

"But we assimilate our emigrants," said Franklin, "as fast as possible and probably faster than any other nation on earth."

"A good many reformers make this same statement," said Richard, "but come and take a stroll with me through Chinatown, or any of the numerous groups of foreign concentration in our cities, and I will show you that you cannot Americanize a native of any other country as soon as you are pleased to believe. Take yourself, for instance. If you were suddenly transplanted to Italy, Portugal, Hungary, Poland, China, you would stand by the principles of the United States to the last ditch. No one could make you a Chinaman, nor could they make you a Russian.

"Wise men have said 'races will not mix,' and it is very true. Nations of a common language and a common method of accomplishing the desired end will oftentimes mix to the mutual advantage of both. These are the kind of newcomers that we will assimilate in short order. But there are hoards of people coming to our shores that will not mix, that will always have to live apart from us if they and their seed remain here for centuries."

"Some time ago," said Brown, "in answer to

a question asked by friend Cyril, you stated that there were enough people in some part of the globe to jump down on this mass of confusion and blot it out as of yore. Now I am unable to find this powerful branch of humanity. It seems to me with the great powers of the earth already forming an arbitration court, and all the leading men of the world arguing universal peace, the huge genii you bring up for us to contemplate is rather airy, like the famous friend of Aladdin."

"Your exceptions come rather belated," replied Richard. "But they shall be answered, and any more questions that you wish to bring up regarding statements I have made. I will answer all questions provided the Club wish to listen to the threshing out of old straw."

"Well, gentlemen of the Sphinx Club," asked Brown, "shall our friend Richard answer such questions as we wish to bring up regarding former statements? I for one vote aye."

"Well," said Franklin, "why can you not

ask your questions when the matter is under discussion?"

"I cannot ask off-hand questions," said Brown. "My conception of the meaning of some lines of argument is slow, but of course I leave it to the Club to decide the matter."

"Well," said Graham, "I move that if any two members object to such bringing up of former topics that the question will be thrown out." It was so voted.

"This question of Brown's," said Richard, "is quite a natural one. There are very few people in our country today that will admit that anything of this sort can possibly happen. They get together in their cities and drive out the dark night with bonfires of electric lights and feel pompous and brave in their vast numbers as they parade up and down their city's streets. But let me tell you this is not real bravery. This is not the quality shown by Xenophon and his ten thousand Greeks. They could not have held together in their famous retreat if they had paraded up and down a city's streets for half a night

and debauched the other half. It is not the kind of bravery that causes a country boy to walk unconscious of evil three miles alone at the dead of night, through black forests and lonely meadows, when sent for a doctor or on some other important message, when a city bred lad cannot go into a dark room in his own home without fear and trembling.

"This feeling of cowardice gets uppermost with the artificial city life. The continual round of make-believe demoralizes humanity, and I cannot see why we will not find our Nemesis in the hordes of China, India, and the other densely populated states of Asia.

"We see what the Beacon Light of Asia is doing. I refer to the Japanese. They are beating the white man with his own weapons. If thirty-six millions can do this, what is it possible for four hundred millions to do, or perhaps eight hundred and fifty millions, to include China and the other Asiatic states? Now, I am not crying the 'Yellow Peril' from the house tops. I think this danger is quite remote. But, it is a possibility, nevertheless,

that we can bring upon ourselves in the remote future. As I have said, a nation is not made in a day, nor is it destroyed at such notice, but after a certain stage corruption rolls like an avalanche.

"We must admit that there is stability in the Chinese character. They have occupied the same territory from time immemorial. Every other nation has been subject to radical changes in every possible condition they have ever attained, but the Celestial remains the same through centuries and centuries. And what is this great mongrel secret? We of the Western world cannot call it progress. It is a condition utterly unknown to us. We cannot comprehend the Chinese. They are repulsive to us. But we are obliged to believe in their endurance. Can we say as much of ourselves? What have we that will not be a dust heap in ten centuries? There will be no such huge mark of the triumph of manual labor as the Great Wall of China; no massive pyramids will mark the place of regal splendor such as we decorate ourselves with today. These light

fantastic things we make and call magnificent structures are built only for today. These twenty-nine story 'skyscrapers' will be gone tomorrow. They are not made to last. We only live for today. Who will deny that the Chinese Wall is responsible for the integrity of China all these Centuries? It is recorded of one of the very early Chinese emperors that, on assuming the crown, he declared, 'I will, if possible, have no idleness in my dominions, for if there be one idle some other man must suffer cold and hunger.' So he puts them all at work. But whether this ancient monarch meant just what he said is hard to decide. It seems to me that he had discovered that to keep his subjects at work was the main point to be kept in mind. Consequently he built the Great Wall, and thus trained his people to work off their surplus animal spirits at home within their own territory. And does not their whole crude civilization tend to this end? They built the wall to keep their fierce neighbors out, and also to keep themselves in. And they have succeeded in enduring while

all other races have been disrupted and corrupted, and a large number destroyed altogether.

“Now, I am not a lover of the ‘heathen Chinees,’ particularly, and am not desirous of adopting any of their customs, but I am trying to show that there is a great possibility in such stable endurance, and that Asia is a power which, if she awakens, would have to be reckoned with by Western civilization. I see no cause why Eastern history should not repeat itself as well as Western is already doing. The Christian has felt the terrible shock of victorious Islam in the South, and the Slav has recoiled before the fierce Tartar in the North, when Japan was a nonentity. And let us note, in passing, the Egyptian has stood by his Pyramid as long, and perhaps much longer, than the Chinese behind his Wall.

“Do not these huge structures have an alluring and sheltering influence on the races that construct them? We have the facts that the Egyptian is still living in the shadow of

the great Pyramid, and the Chinese still stands by his Wall. The Egyptian has shown, perhaps, a greater degree of stability than the Chinese, for they have been overrun by nearly all the nations of the earth, but have still preserved their nationality. Another tribute might be paid to Egypt. All the really great conquerors have always been impressed with the works of the Egyptians to such a degree that they have patronized the cities of the Nile, some in rebuilding what they had torn down, and others in recognizing Egypt as a place of learning. It was here that the great Alexander built his magnificent city, and it was here that other monarchs of lesser intelligence of antiquity came to learn. It was in the land of the Pharaohs that the nucleus of Christianity was found floating in the bull-rushes of the silent Nile. What a mighty power has arisen from that kindly act of the Egyptian princess? It has reached to the ends of the earth. It was here, too, that man burst through the black cloud of Oblivion, or from here we get the first record of his

awakening. And was it not the laborious task of the building of the Pyramids that broke the spell of darkness enveloping the human intellect? And did not the gigantic task of building the Great Wall of China awaken the Chinese, and produce the great philosophers Confucius and Mencius? As the fruit of honest labor is just meditation which ripens into the golden harvest of deep and righteous thought."

Chapter IV

THE members of the Sphinx Club had strolled into the old hall for the fourth meeting since the opening of the discussion on "Modern Life." "One of the questions that is causing quite an earnest agitation," said Graham, "not only among the clergy, but is seriously discussed by the thoughtful 'man in the street,' is that of 'Race Suicide,' so called. This matter is within the jurisdiction of our Club, I think."

"That's a question," said Brown, "that you should be quite familiar with, since you are a happy man of family."

"My being the happy man of family," said Graham, "is no doubt the reason why I do not know the exact cause of this disquieting question, being contented in the state I find myself is the direct cause of my ignorance, as you said awhile ago. 'Ignorance is bliss where it is folly to be wise.'"

"I don't see," said Brown, "but that I am in the same state of mind that you are; the only difference being that I enjoy single blessedness, and you enjoy double happiness. I must put it to fit your case. I have a nice home, friends and our Club, and I have all the necessaries of life; I have money enough to purchase anything I wish, but, of course, I use the same reasoning power in holding onto my purse-strings and in letting them loose that I would if my money belonged to some other person and only held in honest trust by myself. I live in luxury to a certain extent; go as I please and come when I please; but, as I said, my pleasure is governed by my best judgment, and in this way I get the most real pleasure from my amusement that can be gotten therefrom, but I find if I was in the double state of Graham I could not live happily, as my income being enough for one would come far short if two or more were helping to empty the pocket-book; also I am contented in my present state; I make no vows, so I break none. I can stay out late or come in

early ; I have the liberty that all men crave, but like the fabled Frogs, who craved for a king and received one in the shape of a Stork, who at once set about to eat them up, so men crave for liberty and get married."

"If we were all of that state of mind," said Graham, "there would be little left on this earth, even for the King of Darkness to gloat over in a hundred years, and 'Race Suicide' would be accomplished."

"Yes," said Brown, "none know this better than I, but why are conditions so hard on the married man? Why is the cost of living so high in comparison to man's earning power? Why cannot things be regulated to a man's ability? 'I am single because I cannot afford to marry' a hundred young fellows of my acquaintance will declare. Others are weak enough to marry and then we read in the daily press notices of divorce granted for 'Non-support,' or 'Desertion,' and the great question of Divorce is probed at with gold-headed canes, handled with kid gloves and fountain pens, else the hero descends to the

'Abyss' and is lost in the general confusion of common, poverty-stricken every day life. Those who are left will ask, 'Where is Smith now?' 'Oh, he got married,' will be the answer. The places of congenial companionship know him no more. He is like one who has been carried out to sea on a raft, there is no hope of ever seeing him again, do you think I can feel justified in accepting such a life as this? No, I feel that I would be doing an injustice to my children to bring them into the world with nothing to feed them on or clothe them with; and in justice to myself in slaving to keep body and soul together.

"Another evil presents itself to me, the fact of the inferior quality of the wives of men of strong principles and stainless character, the number of weak, peevish and nagging girls that these fellows marry is astounding, and usually these men have had 'their pick' of all kinds. The young man will sit down beside a fine healthy girl of youth and college education; she has lovely dreams of some dark, handsome, curly-headed Prince of untold

wealth who is dying for her if she will only wait until he can cast off his mask of a Donkey's head bestowed on him by a witch. This disgusts the youth and he runs away, and the lovely girl, seeing him run away, cries a little, but finally decides to wait for her Prince,—she waits from seventeen to twenty-five, more or less, but finally marries the Jackass' head in the hopes of breaking the spell, and incidentally preventing the terrible catastrophe of being an 'old maid.' She awakes out of her delusion when she receives the Jackass' return from the 'Club,' but instead of the harmless mule there appears the terrible head of the Hydra.

"Well, I left my young man on the run; he stops to talk with a 'well-read' girl, but plain to look upon. She has dreams of just what a man should be and she will not look at anything else unless there is a gold-lining to his pockets, for, of course, 'we must have enough to live on and keep ourselves, and father and mother, and help brother with his education.' Our young man travels on; he finds a beau-

tiful girl without much learning ; she lives only for style ; she paints her cheeks and covers her graceful form with 'hooks' to catch the gold fish only,—no matter who or what he is, if he glitters that is enough. Our young man hurries on and finally meeting with rebuffs on all sides he picks up a girl that only knows she is a girl. She is usually homely, never looks neat and don't intend to, and in desperation he marries her and goes through his Purgatory. These, Graham, are the reasons I do not enter the matrimonial state and this is the cause of 'Race Suicide,' as the young men cannot afford to marry and live right. These are the reasons we have so many bachelors in our cities."

"You only illustrate one more of the great evils of our 'high civilization,' Brown," said Richard. "Your fastidious young girls are only one of the products of these times, our young men are suffering with the same disease, and I judge you have a touch of it also. Still you have a very good defence of your course, and I could pardon you, for I can

hardly blame a man for getting what little comfort he can from this short life of ours.

“Of course, most of our young men marry, but there is an ever increasing number that are of your mind, and these are the ones that should marry and bring up the future generations, for they have prepared themselves to live right, and are thus the ablest teachers for the young America coming up to take the reins of government. There is truth in your statement that desperation drives many men to matrimony, for misery likes company, and also debt drives men to wed, as Kipling sings in his old song :

‘So long as Aces take the King,
Or backers take the bet,
So long as debt leads men to wed,
Or marriage leads to debt;
So long as Lust and Lucre tempt
Straight riders from their course,
So long as with each drink we pour
Black brewage of Remorse.’

“It is the great confusion of the city life that brings about these conditions. The evil

of commercialism is rampant, we must get back to nature if we wish to have conditions as they should be. We belong to nature and must live near her. Everything teaches us this, but we will not learn. Our bodies are composed of the very same elements that nature puts into all her wonderful works. Oxygen, hydrogen, nitrogen and carbon she works into all her magnificent and boundless creations. Man, beast, birds of the air, fishes of the sea, trees of the forest, in fact, all the vegetable and mineral life, are composed of these same ingredients, the difference we find in all these things is but the skilful hiding of the same material in the grand symmetrical delusion of arrangement governed by the Great Artist, and man is the only one of these mighty creations that is given that divine gift of reason. It is he alone who can use this gift. It is he who can create the great destructive power of picric acid, and it is he who can cause the Milk of Human Kindness to flow, and as we look at the growing boy we wonder which he will endeavor to promote with his

strong right arm, therefore the care we should exercise in training him, he should not be the passion flower that blooms only in the night, but he should be the stalwart rose that blooms the season through, the product of the matured plant.

"We are, if we are normal men, all alike in the body. Each of us is subject to the same passions, each has the same degree of good and bad; we also have the liberty of cultivating each virtue and each passion. Our degree of manhood is acquired by the degree we cultivate virtue. The degree of evil is governed by the extent we cultivate passion. You must sow pure seed and keep the weeds away from the tender plant if you wish to reap the bountiful harvest.

"In those simple days of yore men who 'built' the United States of America did not use enough money in their daily life to pay a street car fare, Honor and Justice and Brotherly Love were the legal tender of our forefathers. When a young man married he would receive as wedding gifts the homely

and practical only with which to furnish his humble home, he would receive a plot of land to till and build his house on, his neighbors and friends would take a couple of days 'off' and have a 'House Raising,' which means that they would come in large numbers, build the young man's house and barn for him and the only recompense they received was Brotherly Love. What a golden price these men received for their labor. If you and I would receive it for arduous labor we would—what would we do in this tense age? We would likely bring out a gun and demand gold, because we do not know what rare value our ancestors derived from life. I almost laugh when I repeat that all the recompense these friends would expect from the young man was a return of the good deeds that they had lavished on him.

"Brotherly Love, Kindly Acts, Fellowship among men, how light and airy these words sound, like something very far away, in fact, like something of almost impossible conception. Is it not so in this mad rush for riches?

Does man ever stop to hear such words but to laugh at them, and shove his struggling brother down deeper into the Slough of Despond that he might gather the few golden coins that the brother would drop in his downfall."

"I cannot agree with you," said Graham. "I believe that there are as good men nowadays as there were in the eighteenth century."

"Yes, there are as good men, no doubt," said Richard, "but they do not show their good side at the proper time. The individual man is very often a good man, but take man collectively and he is getting very bad. I have touched on the individual man before in former discussions somewhat, and I don't think I would ever tire of directing your attention to him. He is 'all in all,' and we should correct him and not reach out for a million to mould as one man, we are so prone to try the impossible.

"Did you ever note the wild heedless actions of a crowd in a city's street? I have seen a rat run out from a building on a great public

thoroughfare and actually stop the entire traffic for half an hour, as the rat ran into the street messenger boys spied him and rapidly made after him, then a street cleaner came along to assist in the killing, then a truckman stopped to see the fun, then another and another, and the crowd on the sidewalk had by this time become a struggling mass of humanity shouting 'who's killed,' 'who's hurt,' 'anybody robbed,' 'police.' Large trucks and heavy delivery wagons had effectively blocked trolley cars and all other traffic, and all this was not ended until a 'cop' had killed the rat. Now if you or I had met one of the men individually and told him that a messenger boy was going to kill a rat on the corner in a few moments and have asked this man to rush wildly about and shout 'murder,' 'burglars,' 'police,' he would direct us the nearest way to Bellevue Hospital in short order.

"Did you in your younger days walk down Chestnut Street, Philadelphia, and stop suddenly in a conspicuous place and gaze intently at the upper windows of a large build-

ing for the fun of seeing a hundred people do the same who were a moment before hurrying madly on to 'Somewhere?' I have.

"Did you ever note the way that people eat their noonday meals in ten minutes and spend an hour watching a drayman struggle to make his poor old fallen horse rise once more to his feet? Have you ever noted what a panic a fire sale will make on the street and how goods that under ordinary sale would not go at forty-nine cents will be carried off in triumph at sixty-nine cents?

"Do you know that Style requires as many human sacrifices as did the Druids in old Britain? Shall I take you into the theatres, at the race tracks, to the beer gardens, to show you far worse examples of man collectively?

"We have a large number of good solid men, but they are individual men, and even these put into a great crowd most of them would do the bidding of the greatest fool as quickly as they would obey the order of the wisest man or the greatest philosopher, the individual man is what we must have if we are to

reach a right civilized state. Everything in this great world has its own individuality. This must be for pure and united action.

"Have you ever looked over the battlefield of Harper's Ferry and met the farmers of the country side, and received their salutations of 'How do?' 'Nice day?' Not merely a farmer you might meet in the field, but every one you meet, in the woods, on the roads, in the by-paths, everywhere you come across a man, woman, or child, it is the same 'good-will toward men' attitude.

"I will not raise the question of our Southern farmer being very much better than our Northern city man, but here is a pearly drop of Fellowship from what we would no doubt call the dark ages of American development, namely, the eighteenth century civilization. I will not argue what causes the hearty expression of 'How do?' to float from the mouths of these backwoodsmen when they see me strolling along the road. It is perhaps that the kindly invitation to 'come up to see my place the next time you come down' involves the payment of

a double ransom for a dinner. I care not, but it is that echo of a far away honest and honorable civilization that comes to me from the Past as I hear these free-hearted people that I found in this far away spot. Perhaps this is a relic of the old southern chivalry, but I choose to associate it farther back to the dear old Revolutionary times; southern gallantry is a product of these times as well. How beautiful of the grand old Potomac to be able to secrete so simple but such all-powerful expressive jewels as these in her verdant hills and valleys. Far from the metallic clang of modern speech tuned to the 'Almighty Dollar' ritual.

"In gazing over this picture of nature, framing the Potomac and the cradle of the Shenandoah what havoc would be made of all this grand flowing life of nature's bosom were it to be changed into a city. Instantly, everything would be changed from life to death, for man kills everything that shows life in building his city. He changes everything from real to unreal; every right is wronged, and this sylvan

spot would become like unto the German legend in which a traveller waxing tired in his long journey fell asleep on a mountain side, but was soon awakened by a great noise, as of an earthquake, he jumped to his feet and saw where yesterday was a beautiful valley of meadows and forests, now changed to a city of lofty towers and low houses, and crooked streets, he descends into the city and as he walks along the street great bells were ringing out loudly and continuously, and all the people were hurrying about with downcast eyes and worried look without noticing the stranger, some were rushing around madly on the streets and shouting 'hurry, hurry, your time is short, we will be buried tonight!' The traveller tried to stop a young man to ask him what was the matter with everybody, and what city he was in, but the man pushed him aside roughly and hurried on. After trying to hold up other persons our traveller finally stopped an old man and inquired what city it was. The old man said 'Oh! I see you are a Christian, you must not stay here, for this is the Doomed

City which was buried for its wickedness, and is allowed to come to the earth's surface for a day but once in a hundred years. We shall be buried tonight, so hurry out of this wicked place, your time is short as the sun is burning low and the bells are warning us of the end.' So the old man led the traveller back to the mountain side where he soon fell asleep and when he awoke the city had disappeared."

"Well, now, leaving physical man for awhile," said Venner, "my mind returns to the beautiful in nature. How many times I have looked in vain for the red-breasted robin, the blue birds, the orioles, and all those more beautiful birds of song and bright colors that New England should have in abundance. Where are they, and why have they disappeared from their old haunts? Why when in the city as I throw crumbs out of my window do I see only the flutter of the always dirty little gray-brown sparrow? Why do I see the noble buffalo only in a cage enclosure in a modern city park?"

"It seems to me," said Cyril, "you do not look in the right place for your red-breasted robin and other birds of song, we have them still in some parts of New England, and as to the English sparrow, he seems to be the only bird we can civilize."

"I merely asked the question," said Venner, "because I missed these things of beauty and song, these emblems of purity, what say you, friend Richard?"

"Quite true, Cyril," said Richard, "we have 'civilized' the English sparrow, we have taught him to eat every description of food and to drink every kind of liquid, he has learned to live and breed fast under the sad conditions that our cities offer to a homeless wanderer, he has learned the great secret of modern civilization, to rob and to drive out all his useful brethren of song and beauty. In fact, he has increased in numbers to such an extent that he declared war against even man and several pitched battles have been fought with the people of Massachusetts. I don't know which side won, but I do know that he still

roams about in roving bands devouring everything within reach in the enemy's country, so I judge the sparrow came out victorious."

"The more beautiful robin and blue bird cannot be 'civilized' because they belong to a higher and nobler civilization than this. They are foreign to a modern city. They demand a clear, healthful air, green grass and trees, in short they are nature's finest works of art, and require her bosom to live in, require her tenderest care. They are too pure to dwell in contact with so much evil. They are like Adam before he ate of the fruit of the tree of knowledge, but they are much wiser than he, as they prefer to die rather than to eat the poisonous fruit that the serpent would entreatingly offer them."

"Well," said Cyril, "the buffalo has given place to the cow and ox on our great Western plains."

"Or rather," said Richard, "they were victims of civilization, they were slaughtered by thousands for the purpose of making buffalo robes to satisfy Style; one hunter killing

as many as eight hundred animals in a week's shooting. Why this mutilating of nature? Why this disfiguring of the earth's surface? Men only reap greater curses with every blow they strike at the beautiful in nature. Do they not know that these things would not be beautiful if they did not have a beautiful work to perform for man?

"Let me recall Whittier's lines of the mythical cause of the red on the robin's breast. A boy threw a stone at the bird in the presence of his grandmother.

"Nay," said the grandmother, "have you not heard,
My poor bad boy of the fiery pit,
And how drop by drop this merciful bird,
Carries the water that quenches it?"

* * * * *

"He brings cool dew in his little bill,
And lets it fall on the souls of sin;
You can see the mark on his red breast still,
Of the fires that scorch as he drops it in."

"Ah, yes, these noble animals and handsome birds and beautiful flowers are here to help guide and to help hold up the 'right hand and

the left' of man in his heavy task of solving his destiny."

"I for one," said Brown, "can vouch for the usefulness of the birds in one line of inquiry, that of the weather. I do not have to leave my hammock on a summer's day to seek the knowledge of the next day's storm. I notice the birds in the elms above me ruffle up their feathers and fly swiftly to-and-fro if it is to be stormy. The beautiful swan in our small pond who is of no practical use except to float around and look graceful is even a better barometer than my birds."

"That bird," said Cyril, "has a good right to impart some of his knowledge to you if he has lived one-half of the three hundred years allotted to his kind."

"Yes," said Richard, "the water fowl show the approach of the storm more quickly than the birds of the wing, they, too, ruffle up their plumage and swim aimlessly about and utter loud harsh cries. Our domestic fowl will lose all ambition to run about if a storm be approaching. They will stand, with droop-

ing tails, on one leg and look at you with half-closed eye wondering no doubt why you too do not take a little time from your hurry and bustle and observe the weather also. Why do we need great weather observatories when we have the knowledge all about us if we wish, an old farmer can tell the weather a day or two in advance and come as near as our weather prophets do with all their infinite detail of investigation. We study the sky in all parts of the country to discover any change, we make notes of such change and run to the telegraph and despatch the precious information to all other parts of our country, while we make haste to tell everyone we meet of the storm that too oftentimes never comes, we make haste to print the information, we tack it up on our door posts.

“And is not a great deal of our boasted learning acquired in this way? We shut our eyes and ears to all these natural truths given to us by Divine Nature and accept only such results that we can acquire through long, laborious, farsical and artificial red tape. We

lean more to the false power of the dust embodied in the long curling form of the serpent instead of adopting the knowledge at our hands embodied to a high degree in the beautiful birds which are the highest and the purest power of Athena, the great Greek goddess, meaning the pure incarnated air. Are not we like unto the professor who spent three weeks inspecting a farmer's corn crib to ascertain the fact of the number of rows of corn on a cob? When he called the farmer and told him of his wonderful discovery what was his disgust when the farmer said, 'If you had come to me before you went to my crib I could have told you the same thing, by gosh; as I saw you hang around the crib so much I had about decided that you were stealing my corn, think of this, if the professor had gone to the right place he would have gotten his information; if he had asked a student of nature he would have gotten the truth in a moment instead of spending three weeks in the search. Study nature if you wish to be learned. This is the secret of Greek culture and of all other real culture.'

Chapter V

 HE Sphinx Club had come together for their fifth meeting. "I wish to call your attention, gentlemen," said Wheeler, "to the fact that this is the fifth meeting of our Club, since we undertook to help explain some of the causes of the great evils that beset man on all sides—notwithstanding the effort of one of our members to exclude these questions from our discussions, I think we should feel gratified at having been able to carry the discourses so long without our strenuous friend's objection, taking a more powerful form."

"Oh! well," said Cyril, "I soon found out that I would have to be lenient with you fellows, and when you awoke the lazy Brown by your eloquence, I could not help but become interested myself. In fact, I think we have not carried some of the questions that

we have talked over far enough. I think there is plenty of chance to enlarge on a great many questions we have had under discussion, and that the points that we have let go are almost as essential as those we have brought out."

"I feel," said Graham, "that we have made a stride in the right direction, and if we do not take as much time to draw a conclusion as we might, still I think we brought out the points sufficiently for our own satisfaction, but, perhaps, we could lengthen our sessions somewhat."

"I don't think," said Franklin, "it would be to our good to lengthen our sessions."

"I think we use time enough," said Richard.

"And I," put in Venner.

"In studying Darwin," said Wheeler, "and other great scientists I am struck with the ruthless manner in which they handle man. They tell us man is an 'intelligent atom.' Man is an 'Intelligence assisted by organs.' They cannot seemingly get away from the fact that there is, and always was, this intelligence."

"No," said Richard, "they can carry out

their theory of the animal part of man, but they cannot account for the divine spark of intellect."

"It seems to me," said Cyril, "most of their theories are built upon exceptions."

"I consider that Darwin's natural selection," said Venner, "is but another way of putting the story of the wearing out of animal power, or the using up of waste material."

"I agree with Cyril," said Wheeler, "on the exceptional cases adopted by scientists to prove their theories. It seems to me the mere accident of a child 'taking back' that is a child having the same peculiarities as its grandparents, as we will oftentimes notice, and I know of the offspring of cattle being as unlike either father or mother, that an expert will declare that it was a 'mongrel breed' when it came from what was supposed to be pure stock. I have seen a colt born with markings of white from a pair of 'bay' parents, and domestic fowl will often produce parallel cases. I have seen a black Spanish fowl produce a black and white chick amongst a clear black

brood. We call these 'Freaks of Nature' and forget them, but it seems evident to me that any of these 'freaks' could upset some of the smooth theories of some of these scientists."

"Well," said Brown, "there is a statement made by some that I cannot agree with, which is 'rarity is a precursor of extinction.' I cannot see it in this light. A certain great people become corrupt and pine away until another people come and capture them and their country, kill and work them until there is only a comparatively few left, but that few by being restrained from the corrupting influences that caused their downfall in the first instance become powerful again and turn on their now corrupt oppressors and regain their lost prestige."

"These great and good men studied to help explain the mystery of the world," said Richard, "and of the wonderful Life herein. They tell us we are a combination of very small cells. Some say that man was originally a four-footed animal, and others give us overwhelming proof that man was always erect and

walked on two feet, which any lay brother will instantly swear to. We are made up of 'cells' and these 'cells' are made up of other 'cells' and these still more 'cells', and so on.

"The planetary system, man says, is made up of so many stars and suns. He will tell you how the sun's total diameter is eight hundred and sixty-five thousand miles, and that it is about ninety-five millions of miles distant from the earth, that if you are inclined to stroll around the earth's orbit before breakfast you would have to travel one hundred and eighty-six millions of miles, that the nearest fixed star is only twenty-six trillions of miles from your doorstep. And how many fixed stars are behind that? Millions and millions. Like the world life, it goes on to the infinite, 'cells' within 'cells,' stars behind stars. If man can manufacture a more powerful telescope he will find more stars. If he makes a more powerful microscope he will discover more cells, more minute atoms.

"But where is the missing link between the animal and the intellectual being? Why can-

not the scientist connect the man's body and his soul? Who holds the key to this great mystery?

"Here these great minds have worked out an almost perfect theory. Why could they not finish it? Why like the builders of the Tower of Babel are they allowed to build so high and then grasp tongues of heresy? When they near the pinnacle they become mystified. Confusion sets in and if they go any further they become lost, and go round and round until they get back to their starting point. Do they not tell us we were apes? They trace the well-balanced and symmetrical body of man back to the ugly body of an ape, and still back until we are on equal terms with the first 'cell' or 'life atom' that starts out to become the croaking midnight frog!

"No doubt the common house fly that so persistently buzzes around your face is a great fly philosopher out on a tour of inspection of puny man, who has just jumped up from the easy chair in his cosy library, kicked off his three pairs of slippers (for Mrs. Fly Philoso-

pher to pick up again while buzzing in a subdued way, ('John's such a careless man'), and adjusted his spectacles over his thousands of compound eyes, and has come at you at the rate of six hundred strokes per second of his delicate wings, and, in fact, if he wishes to have the honor of taking the first observation of you, he can increase his speed six or seven fold, if you watch him very closely you may be able to see him pull out a memorandum book from his inside pocket and hurriedly pencil down a few lines discoursing on the new brand of cigar you are smoking.

"Perhaps the worm you see crawling along the gutter is an expert chemist having just left his underground laboratory bristling with retorts, test-tubes and little Bunsen lamps with their blue flickering flames, to try and verify some of the observations he has made of the per cent. of oxygen required in the air to keep alive the large Brahma rooster in your back yard. And how truly he should keep out of the way of this fat member of the feathered

tribe that excites his solicitude, we know if he does not.

"These brilliant intellects that work out this story are not above the commonest snake in the grass! the beetle that lays its eggs in the cow-dung! they have gone so far up the Tower of Babel that they forget what they learned on the way. Where did the power come from that enabled these men to search for these cells, to search for the infinite? It seems to me they are lost in the mist of high clouds they have reached and fall back, but still believe they are going higher up; so the present day intellectual and animal man is taken by them and set down in what they call the Pleistocene period, or the very beginning of their researches. They look at the sky and are lost in its wonderful Space. They look at the earth Life and are lost in its immensity.

"Carlyle says of man 'For the highest God dwells visible in that mystic unfathomable visibility which calls itself 'I' on earth.'

" 'Bending before man,' says Novalis, 'is a reverence done to the revelation in the flesh.

III

We touch Heaven when we lay our hand on a human body.' This is a very agreeable contrast to the coldblooded way in which our famous scientists picture man and his being.

"Why do these words 'ring true' in our hearts, is it our Vanity that causes us to listen to this noble definition of man? Is it our Self-love that makes us desire to be thus defined? Is it Conceit that drives us many times against our wills to praise and to worship Purity wherever we find it? If it is then here we have the ingredients for making the Soul, no matter how much man will outrage and destroy, he will, in his inner-self, and more especially when he returns to his normal state, praise and worship the good in all things. These writers, who, in their learned trance, call man the embodiment of 'nothingness' in their sober moments do him the very highest honor in saying that he is the apex of all world life, and that he is 'an intelligence assisted by organs.' This 'intellect' or soul, has been recognized by all races of men in every clime since creation; be they learned or the untutored savage. The Neth of

the Egyptians; the Bel of the Caldeans; Athena of the Greeks; Jupiter of the Romans; Allah of the Mohammedans; Buddha of the Buddhists; are but the different names of the same Eternal God that the soul forces the body to believe in and worship. Pagans, Idolaters worshipped idols as the visible emblems of their God.

“One tendency of modern times is to question our religion. Scientific investigation is creating a feeling of unbelief in our people, our ‘great thinkers’ are taking some exceptions to the New Testament, and a good part of the old has already been called fiction. Our scientists seem to be in this fight against the Bible because it bids them halt in their mad career. They make fun of the great teachings that has made it possible for them to have the opportunities to become ‘broad-minded men’ of learning. They make light of the great laws that have civilized the world. Let me here quote a few lines from the immortal Pope:

"Go! wondrous creature, mount where science
guides,

Go! measure earth weigh air and state the tides;
Instruct the planets in what orbs to run;
Correct Old Time and regulate the sun.

* * * * *

Go! teach Eternal wisdom how to rule,
Then drop into thyself and be a fool.

* * * * *

Trace science then with modesty thy guide;
First strip off all her equipage of pride;
Then see how little the remaining sum."

You will see in the comic press the liberty
that is taken with the teachings of the Old
Testament. This would not be so if the learn-
ed man had not first ridiculed some of these
stories. They cannot give us anything to re-
place this Good Book so why take this away
and leave us to flounder around in despair at
the feet of the golden calf.

"I see in this disregard for the sound doc-
trines of our forefathers another sign of phys-
ical decay. We are gradually drifting in to
the same state that preceded the stoic period
in Rome. Our learned professors in trying to

reconcile philosophy and theology are undermining the foundations of law and order, cutting down the staff that all great nations must have to walk with and endure. They raise up the ghost of despair in the minds of the weak. The great mass of the people become indifferent, are driven to adopt the stoic state of mind which preceded the downfall of Greece and especially Rome. They follow the professors and ask each other if he knows what he believes. Each evades the question since the learned men whom in former times he called on to help him prove an argument will only say 'We believe only what we can prove.' He says nothing. He stays away from church more often for when he goes he is in such a state of turmoil between these fellows' arguments and the great natural facts of wonderful divine Nature that he is completely puzzled, consequently he becomes a 'back-slider.' The church loses some of his support, the good sound judgment is at a loss how to proceed. He hesitates, he wrestles with himself, and while all this confusion is going on the church

is, of course, losing power to do good. Less support in moral and financial matters because of this great black doubt that has arisen, and at the present the ministry is becoming less able to carry its load by the absence of the talent it should have. The young men of strong character are becoming stoic. They too, can believe only what they can prove, and they cannot go before the people and preach doctrines that they are in doubt about. They too, like the Romans of old, are coming to look upon religion as a political necessity, to be tolerated for the control of 'the vulgar masses' only. Here is our undoing. Here is where we depart from the great Power that made us. Here is where we introduce the unbridled stud of evil. We must have something to do. We cannot lie dormant. We have lost our faith, we must have something. What will it be? What it has always been in the past, Pleasure! Man runs to the theatres, to the pool rooms and beer gardens, and the like, trying to forget the fate that awaits him. He keeps himself in a high nervous state and re-

laxes only when sickness comes or death knocks at his door. Love and duty are unknown, we are getting to be a nation of law-breakers. Our young break every known law. There is no restraint, no governing, no sense of duty in them. There is no respect for the weak and aged. Why such utter disregard for all things that make a national life secure or an individual one?

“Conversation, association of persons from the cradle to middle life, social intercourse create high ideals in the exchange of views of thought on current subjects. We are in this way able to place our brother men in their proper place in our confidences and relations, religious business and political, etc. (this is much more necessary to a republic than to a monarchy where each man is properly graded by birth and caste.) This condition is rapidly disappearing from our country.

“In rambling around the earth, in short stays in places, tend toward the breaking up of man’s contented mind. There is no more Christianizing influence than a good home.

Man without a home is nothing more than a beast, and the farther away a people get from the homelike influence the nearer they get to disruption. The loose city life is agnostic to the quiet pure home hearth where the family gathered 'round the fireside to listen to mother or father read some good strong healthy story. Far from the evil thought that fill a large part of the books of fiction of today, the younger generation reading about the 'natural' hero or heroine shocking their elders in every move they make. The author gushingly describes his heroine as being 'so natural, so full of life' that she does not know right from wrong, or more times he will say 'Evil is to those who evil thinks,' meaning to infer that his heroine does no wrong because it is her nature. It is not that her actions are shocking, actually shocking. Her actions may be natural enough, but it is the absence of common sense she shows in the time and place that she acts, that shocks her elders and makes the book unfit for the young to read. But they read this kind of

literature, act the same. They make fun of the 'puritanical' ideas of the older school of humanity, they have no patience with destiny, try to grasp their fate with both hands, endeavor to beat nature, only to reap a harvest of green poisonous fruit, as one must if he picks his apples before they are ripe.

"And all this fever heat; all these efforts of wonderful brain power, 'man overcoming nature,' they call it, all these great mechanical delusions, after all this riot, they fall down and cry out in their weakness as Nature steps in and makes them feel what little helpless children they are."

"I believe," said Brown, "that the time will come when Nature will take men up in her arms and carry them back to the doorstep of her home, as any mother picks up her offspring from the middle of the street where they would likely be run down and killed. She knows that they have been punished enough for their going astray, so with a word of caution she will leave them once more to play at her hearthstone."

"Undoubtedly," said Richard, "history repeats itself continually but it is not necessary for us to go through all this suffering, endure all this havoc for the sake of sitting in the middle of the road to mix mud pies. We cannot follow in the footsteps of the polluted Romans without arriving at the same goal as they.

"The debauched Romans went to the Colosseum to witness the powers of foreign strong men. We go to Vaudeville shows in order to see a strong natural robust man in these latter days of dried-up counter jumpers, bloated bartenders (tend bar mostly on the outside), and other specimens of indoor imbeciles."

"There have been men of abnormal strength," said Cyril, "in all ages. The Old Testament mentions Goliath, the Philistine. And later we have Sampson the strong man of Israel, and I recall one Teutobach of ancient history fame."

"Yes," said Richard, "they are sent to a nation in a time of a bondage or at the period of a downfall of its manhood as a living reproach. They have accomplished nothing of

importance in their brief irregular appearances. Goliath was killed by a small boy, and the Philistines straightway routed. Sampson was ensnared by a woman, delivered by her to his enemies and put to death, and at his time you will note, that the Jews were in bondage, and Teutobach, the great German ruffian was captured and his host of barbarians totally defeated. Let me tell you, my friend, anything in the extreme is dangerous, is not right. Emerson said that 'Justice is the rhythm of things.' Equilibrium is another name for justice.

"What is this that an eminent Englishman remarks of the American college man after a visit to our shores on a tour of inspection of our colleges, he said, 'The American college man is becoming very feminine in his looks and manners.' He did not examine our stores, our shops, and offices, and professional men; he did not look into our factories, if he had I think he would have said that all of us were fast becoming 'squaw men,' getting weak in our bodies due to our consumption of foods

unfit to eat and liquids unfit to drink, lack of proper healthful exercise and close confinement in badly ventilated buildings crowded together in our miserable ant hill cities.

“Where our grandfathers got their manly forms and brainy heads from corn meal and wheat grown on their own farms and carried direct to the miller, ground and brought home, kneaded by grandmother and put into the oven. No adulteration here, no alum, no ammonia, no sulphate of copper in this bread. Where their cider came from sweet apples from their own trees and their wines direct from their own vineyards, our men have to drink concoctions of salicylic acid and countless other drugs. Where their water came from the pure sparkling old oaken bucket with the blue trout sporting in the silver pebbled well with its frame of moss covered rocks, we now draw our life giving draught from dark muddy rivers too oftentimes polluted with foul sewage, dead animals, and rotten vegetation.”

“You know the reason,” said Cyril, “of the passing of the Old Oaken Bucket, it became

so polluted that the people had to do away with it."

"Quite true," answered Richard "how could anything so pure live in a densely populated city and remain uncontaminated. The Old Oaken Bucket was encompassed by evil sewage, and, of course, under such abuse it became man's worst enemy as surely as it was his best friend under healthful conditions. This is the nature of man and beast, birds of the air, fishes of the sea, and all things.

"You cannot find a dozen men in a thousand that are enjoying perfect health today. What a horrible tale lies behind the thousands of patent medicine advertisements that fill our newspapers and magazines, that are dropped at our doors, laid into our hands as we pass along the streets, that glare in front of us in the electric cars, that trail along our railroads, shutting out the view of our beautiful world, that are nailed on every old board fence, painted on bleak rocks and old barns, and are at every visible point along our rivers, in fact they even fly them in the air far above our

city streets, throw them on the very clouds. Now there is a demand, else there would not be such a supply of these things. Of course there is a demand since man is making himself such an easy prey to disease, and since one set of men in their lust for gold are handing out copperas, alum, chromate and sulphate of lead, salts of tin, gypsum, sulphuric acid, hydrochloric acid, china clay, caustic lime, red lead, etc., in our food stuffs. Of course such stuff as this creates a demand for patent medicines. Of course these foul drugs prepare us for early graves, and with our twentieth century civilization it is remarkable that the average human frame reaches the age limit of thirty-one years under such abuse. Far better range our humanity out on the battlefield and bid them destroy each other in glorious war, than to kill them like cats in a bag."

"You made the statement," said Cyril, "that a man's social and business status is fixed by conversation and association in a republic, and that this was more necessary to a republic than a monarchy where his status was looked after

by the government to some extent. Now I claim a man is a man under all conditions or should be. If you can 'jump twelve feet in Rhodes' why can't you jump twelve feet here?"

"I agree with you" said Richard, "if I can be a man in Rhodes I can be one here. This is as it should be, but it is not as it is. Man is a mass of contradictions, and under different circumstances he develops himself differently.

"In England for instance they have 'peers' and 'commoners.' The 'peers' have been given 'privileges' for centuries; are considered 'better blood' than the common people. Their cast has no doubt made them as a whole better in culture and their experiences in higher positions has, with the absence of bribery, due to their being provided for by the government, given them a higher sense of duty a commoner would feel the high dignity of the favored place from the top of his head to the sole of his feet and try very hard to make every one he came in contact with feel it also. This attitude gives the unscrupulous lobbyist the opportunity of paying court to him and

basking in the sunshine of his newly acquired fame. Thus after a time they are fast friends and shortly the 'necessary' is running from a corporation's till into the commoner's pocket with no disquieting questions asked, and finally as a report of some shady transaction is noised abroad and he sees his defeat at the next election assured, he will instantly grasp every opportunity to receive 'graft' before his rival be seated. His lack of culture narrows his horizon also at this junction, and he sells himself to the highest bidder without the 'turn of a hair.'

"While the 'peer' receiving the respect due his position in society all his life receives the new honor with the same composure that he shows at all times. He knows that he is a legitimate part of the government of the people, designated and honored as such, and an absolute necessary part of a most honest and stable government, and especially chosen by the people for centuries to perform these functions. This favor is in most cases brought about by some great

noble act in behalf of the nation in times of war. A brave man accomplishes a deed that frees the nation from a great dread, wins a great battle, and saves a large portion of the country from capture by the enemy, if not actually preserving the entire country from ultimate capture by its foes. This man is rewarded by a high place in the councils of the country. He receives a title and it is transmitted to his offspring and they live up to the traditions of their ancestors to a certain degree.

“Every student of history and every close observer of human nature knows what a power tradition has over man. The recounting of the noble deeds of a great grandfather or a father are most inspiring to a son, and he is aware everybody knows the brave acts of his forefathers, and have watchful eyes on him expecting him to act like his parents if a crisis arises and calls for such action. ‘Like father like son’ is what they believe. He has an ancestral castle with trophies of the achievements of those gone before him. The collection of

portraits of his noble ancestors as they appeared in life look down upon him, and he feels he must do as near right as he can to be worthy of such forefathers. He treads in their footsteps. What they honored he honors, what they considered wrong he considers wrong. So as he is surrounded by every opportunity to fulfill his heritage he usually does, and thus the people are satisfied with their young lord, and hold him in respect as a part of their own government.

“Where in a republic, the changing of high officials so often tends to make the man in office ‘make hay while the sun shines’ lest tomorrow he be deposed. This corruption becomes more flagrant as the city increases in population. About all that two-thirds of the voters know about a candidate is that he is running for the office on a certain party ticket. They do not know whether he is a blackguard or an honest man. And with the confusion created by party organs with all their ‘mud slinging’ a voter cannot believe ‘anything he hears nor half he sees,’ regarding the character

of a candidate. If an honest man is nominated for an office the opposing party will search his record from the cradle, and as no man is perfect they find a flaw and they make a mountain of wickedness out of it. If a base man is nominated on the opposite side they can call him all the names they wish and be right. But what does he care. They have blackened the record of the honest man as well so he stands just as good a chance to be elected as though his own record was clean. This is the reason we see so many unclean men in our high places today. The good men will sit back and say 'let the villains wrangle amongst themselves so long as they don't bother my business.' And as a result corruption walks ungloved in our land. Our men do not know each other. Therefore, I say conversation and association are necessary. We are all strangers. People in cities do not know their next door neighbor, because of a certain evil shifting population that roams about the country staying but a short time in each place. This always occurs where a large number of people concentrate

in a given spot. This scum always comes to the top and destroys the general peace of all.

"In a country of isolated towns and hamlets honest men thrive because they become stable. They 'anchor' in one place and are governed by their traditions to a large extent, and are not corrupted by this Floating Evil. They can shake the hand of their neighbor and have the satisfaction of knowing that they are greeting an honest man. For have they not known him since his birth? There is no smile at your face and stab at your back here. You know your man and he knows you. An ideal condition.

"In this age nearly all our men are the personification of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. No doubt that is the reason of the popularity of this play. Man sees himself as in a mirror, only in a more exaggerated form and he becomes pleased at the exaggeration, for he can say to himself 'I am not as bad as that anyway.' We are all two-faced. We are trying to be somebody else instead of being ourselves. How rarely is an honest open-hearted conscientious man found nowadays. And when found we

soon see that we have nothing in common with him in this century, and we will immediately proceed to divest him at once of all he possesses. We will tell him to look at the moon and see the woman in it and while he is looking we will rifle his pockets. We will shake his hand cordially and relieve him of his watch. We will sell him a 'gold brick' and take his home. And if he cries out that we are thieves, we will tell him he is 'slow' that he is 'easy.' He is like unto Rip Van Winkle, he has slept too long. We have been playing the black game of 'chance' for twenty years and are past masters of the art now, while he has been sleeping. He belongs to the past. He cannot exist with his fellow men today. We are too sharp for him.

"He reads a sign 'This way to a beautiful city' and he finds it leads him to the throne room of Deceit, Envy, Malice and Hatred, the four Kings of Sodom and Gomorrah. And he is mystified with even the language of the country. He reads a sentence from some good man's oration. He sees the simple truth in it at once.

But he afterwards hears another man read the same sentence and scientifically dissect it 'in an attempt to get at the full meaning.' The truth has fled. The dissection of the Word has been its death. This man has taken the truth that a moment ago was so clear and bright to the honest man and cast an impenetrable cloud over it. He has skilfully misconstrued it. Our language is so pliable that an evil person can take a true word and make it stand for his own bad purposes with a little 'dissection.' In fact, a silver-tongued orator can make him think that black is white. Quote every authority to convince him that he is right and make the honest man concede the point in the presence of the arguer. But on getting alone he thinks it over and knows that the orator is a liar. This power of the guilt-edge oration that momentarily convinced him is what we call 'personal magnetism' or the power of a 'positive' person over a 'negative' person. And this is so infused into the modern blood that we are all 'positive' we all must be great men at once, and we have no room for a slow honest

man. We must all be great orators, great thinkers. All of our opinions are of very great weight. We are very great. We don't need any ideals, tear them down, they belong to the simple honest man here and he is nobody. He don't know enough to go in when it rains. We know it all, and we are very practical. We must kill the goose that lays the golden eggs to find the cause of her producing them. And in this wild clamor, this playing to the gallery, we lose the stable, honest, solid purpose of life and the dogged endurance of the preservers of the honor of the country is not here. It cannot live with such fanaticism, such frivolous vanity.

"The 'practical' search of the modern man for the 'truth' leads him into another false door, that of the modern city hospital. In his vain search for wisdom, he has not the time to create a feeling of love in his near fellow beings, or they are occupied in the same search as he and cannot appreciate any of his efforts in this direction. And his children not being brought under control by him with words of

love and command as both are much needed, and not having time enough to satisfy his own search for knowledge he has none for his offspring and they come to look on him as their credit account only. And if he be taken ill he is hurried to the city hospital to be practiced on by young doctors and trained nurses, while his family come to see him when they feel like it. Trained nurses are usually disappointed old maids with a grudge against humanity in general. It is quite evident that they are trained for the money which is in it, anyway, they treat him as a 'case.' No near and dear sympathy to ease his fevered brow. No love proved by long association and kind actions and true friendship such as the sick need and should have. Kind, loving care, sympathetic nature, and true friend in constant attendance is a medicine that performs more cures than all the doctors, nurses or drugs combined. I may add that sick or well, this is what all men crave and each one waits for his neighbor to prove the 'Golden Rule' and consequently he

is still waiting. We are like the Pharaoh who would make his bricks without straw. Our man is a simple 'case' in the hospital, and he is getting to be the same simple 'case' in all walks of life. Everything now must be gigantic. All our business is combination.

"Our whole fabric of civilization is getting to be a union of violent contrasts that must result in an explosion of greater or less dimensions. For we now have no chance for individual worth to count.

"Man is an atom in this masterdomic structure, and is of little consequence from a combination point of view, and in losing his personality he loses all that his life stands for. Here instinctive force compels rebellion.

"Man is proud and when he receives his meat, his bread, even his religion parceled out to him at a stipulated time and quantity like a soldier's rations it wounds his vanity.

"This handling of humanity in 'car-load lots' is degrading. But how else are they to be handled in a great city. They must be pushed and shoved and driven about like cattle. If they

will crowd and jostle each other under a single apple tree, with but a single apple, when it falls only one gets it, and it is usually found to be filled with worms as all 'windfalls' are."

"It is needless to announce," said Franklin, "that we all heartily concur with friend Richard's argument."

"It gives me pleasure," answered Richard, "to be able to express the opinions of all of you so readily, and now, gentlemen, I move we adjourn as it is getting late."

The motion was unanimously carried.

Our friends of the Sphinx Club are still engaged in searching for new truths along scientific lines, are still trying to deduct the true from the false. This is their relaxation from the strenuous life most of them lead; while they are all of very different natures, still they all enjoy with the pleasure of a Nimrod the "sport" of chasing after the beautiful, the sublime, but so elusive, the always new, the always youthful Truth, and if they capture her in one line of thought it matters not if she changes herself instantly into another form; they en-

joy their victory and put their trophy in safe keeping, and with light hearts take up the chase again, while they are not always rewarded by capture, they enjoy a glimpse of the sublime form among the black trees of the forest of Deceit, or find her delicate footprints in the mud of the Doubtful marshes ; they don't seem to tire of the chase ; Venner breaks away once in awhile, but takes up the scent after a brief rest, pushing after the game with increased zeal, and showing a broadening of thought that surprises his fellow members.





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